The Nation

FOUNDED 1865

Vol. CXXXII NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 1931 No. 3432

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Subscription Rates: Five dollars per annum postpaid in the United States and Mexico; to Canada, $5.50; and to foreign countries of the Postal Union, $6.00.

THE NATION, No. 20 Vesey Street, New York City, Cable Address: Nation, New York. British Agent of Subscriptions and Advertising, Miss Gertrude M. Cross, 23 Brunswick Square, London, W. C. 1, England.

RUMORS AFLOAT in New York and Washington say that a campaign to cut wages generally throughout the country has been organized by a powerful but unidentified group of banks. Perhaps the depression and the unusually large surplus of labor available have made such a drive inevitable. Under our imperfect system supply and demand govern the price of labor as they do that of other commodities. In times of depression there is always present a tendency on the part of the owners of industry to slash pay rolls as the first move toward reducing costs, and contributing in no small measure to this tendency is the pressure exerted by the increasing supply of unemployed labor. Both of these influences are at work today, and although they may not yet have brought about a general wage cut, it appears likely that such a reduction may take place on a wide scale should the depression continue much longer; but it is a question whether financiers or owners of industry would be wise in initiating an organized wage-reduction campaign. A campaign of this character would have its greatest effect in those industries where labor is weakest. But if labor costs in any industry comprise a relatively small part of the total costs of production, the reduction of costs and consequent stimulation of sales in such a case will be relatively small. In industries where labor is organized and enjoys high wages, on the other hand, the campaign will have much less chance of succeeding.

HENCE THE HOPE of restoring prosperity by resorting to an indiscriminate drive for wage reduction is vain. This is not to say that labor's earnings have not already been greatly reduced. Mr. Hoover is only playing with words when he declares that the principal industries have supported him in his request that wage scales be maintained. Wage scales have to a certain extent been maintained, but this does not mean, as Mr. Hoover seems to suggest, that labor's income has at the same time been maintained. In fact, it has fallen off sharply in the last year through part-time employment. The Standard Statistics Company estimates the decrease in 1930 at $8,853,000,000 as compared with 1929. Replies from mayors and other municipal officials to *The Nation's* recent questionnaire show that in almost every city part-time employment has resulted in decreased labor income, and hence in decreased purchasing power. It is altogether doubtful that industry will be helped by piling on top of this already drastic reduction in labor's earnings another considerable reduction in the shape of indiscriminate wage cuts. The consequent reduction in production costs may stimulate industrial activity, but industry will at the same time have to contend with an equally large cut in consuming power. The return to prosperity for business depends then to a large degree upon the question of whether the benefits of the former outweigh the evils of the latter. In any event it would behoove the President to devote more attention to this problem, and stop boasting about the maintenance of wage scales.

SECRETARY STIMSON'S selection of William R. Castle, Jr., to succeed Joseph P. Cotton as Undersecretary of State may presage a return to a more conservative administration of our foreign affairs. It is true that Mr. Castle has many important qualities that are always valuable to the diplomatic service. He is a "career man," a man with years of actual experience behind him, and he is perhaps better acquainted with the technical side of foreign-office management than any other person in the State Department. Furthermore, he is extremely capable, intelligent, and shrewd; it has been said of him that he is the cleverest diplomat in the service, and he has upon several occasions in the past proved himself more than a match for the most able of European diplomatists stationed in Washington. On the other side of the picture we find that Mr. Castle has invariably lined up with the most conservative element in the foreign service. He lacks the enlightened liberal approach that distinguished his predecessor; his training and his personal associations have inclined him toward strict observance of conventional procedure; he is likely to be found following

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precedent rather than venturing upon unbeaten paths of diplomacy, as Mr. Cotton was not afraid to do.

WHETHER THE DECISION of the Federal Power Commission in the Appalachian Electric Power Company case is good law will probably not be known until the courts have passed on the question; but it seems to be good sense. At the request of the President, Attorney General Mitchell in September rendered an opinion that the company was entitled to apply for a "minor-part" license, on the ground that the New River is not navigable. Such a license would free the company from the accounting and valuation provisions of the Power Act. The Power Commission has denied the application and required the company to take out a standard license if it wishes to proceed. It passes the question of navigability on to the courts and rests its jurisdiction on Section 23 of the act, which gives it power to require a license if the proposed construction would affect the interests of interstate or foreign commerce. Five States, it will be remembered, joined with the company in denying federal jurisdiction. The practical point is that the company, under the commission's decision, will be subject to the provisions of the Federal Power Act respecting accounting and capitalization, and not to the looser control or lack of control of the States. The case, it would seem, will almost certainly be carried to the courts, where it is to be hoped that the position of the commission may be sustained.

NAVAL AGREEMENTS of any kind will soon become a hissing and a byword if they continue to develop such contentious misunderstandings as have followed recent ones. A few weeks ago it was announced, with a flourish of trumpets, that the Franco-Italian controversy over tonnage parity had been amicably settled and that a treaty supplementing the London accord would soon be signed. Now, however, comes the demand of France for a volume of replacement tonnage by 1936 which Italy regards as preposterous, and Mr. Arthur Henderson's diplomatic hands are tied because the British Admiralty agrees with Italy. Further to aggravate the unsettlement of the settlement, Italy is reported to be kindly disposed toward the Austro-German customs union, and France sees red at the new menace to its security. With Franco-Italian parity up in the air, France and Italy join hands and announce that warships exceeding 20,000 to 25,000 tons are out of date and should be abandoned; which leads Washington to declare that the United States cannot possibly undertake to defend the Panama Canal with vessels of a paltry 20,000 or 25,000 tons and that the 35,000-ton battleship is still necessary. We have not heard that any Power was getting ready to attack the canal, and we seem to remember that not so long ago the United States and a considerable number of other Powers agreed to abolish war as an instrument of national policy. Just why, then, the United States should stand out as the champion of the biggest and costliest war machine afloat is something that Mr. Hoover ought to explain. Is he really expecting another war?

GANDHI IN LONDON will be an interesting spectacle in more ways than one. He intends to brave British weather and British statesmanship alike in his customary dress—a loin-cloth; the sessions of the second round-table conference will have to be accommodated to his habit of observing Monday as a day of complete silence; he will take along his spinning wheel, and he will, of course, adhere to his negligible diet, which would contribute nothing to a state dinner but must be prepared by religious formula. It is more important that Gandhi and his advisers—if he does really act as sole delegate—will go to London not at government expense but at the expense of the Congress Party. By all these gestures, the personal ones as well as the political, Gandhi strengthens a position which was already very strong by reason of his truce with Lord Irwin and his complete dominance of the Congress Party convention. If he can add the prestige that would result from settlement of the Hindu-Moslem problem, he will be in an even better position to press for realization of the bill of rights adopted by the Congress convention. The British, being notorious for their own insistence on taking their customs and their tea with them wherever they go, can scarcely object with logic to Gandhi's personal preferences. The real importance of the London conference lies in the British reaction to Gandhi's political demands.

ADOLF HITLER, the man who was to reform Germany by turning its government over to men of chemically pure Teutonic blood, is meeting with many difficulties. Last September the election victories of his National Socialist Party momentarily frightened the chancelleries of Europe, and for a time threatened Germany's credit standing in Wall Street and elsewhere. The fear of Hitler remained for months, although in his inexperience he began making costly political mistakes almost immediately after the convening of the Reichstag in October. He thought he would overcome the effect of these mistakes by staging a dramatic walkout of his party delegates in the parliament. This, too, missed fire, and since then his followers have taken to quarreling among themselves. The signal for open dissension came when Hitler revealed that he was not strong enough to retain Dr. Wilhelm Frick in power as Thuringian Minister of the Interior. Frick was the only National Socialist to attain to an important government office. Hitler's most serious mistake came in training the Nazi "storm troops" for positive revolutionary action. The storm battalions, having tired of waiting for Hitler to lead them into action, have now rebelled against him. The faction led by Captain Walter Stennes, whom Hitler tried to dismiss from the movement, has captured the party's headquarters and newspaper offices in Berlin, but Hitler still holds the party funds, which were kept in Munich, and this in the end may save him. Even though Hitler should fall, however, the danger of a fascist outbreak will not have been removed.

G. PIATAKOV, a high Soviet official, according to newspaper dispatches has just arrived in Berlin to place $75,000,000 worth of orders with German firms. When M. Piatakov wished to come to this country, he was refused a visa. These two facts deserve notice, as does the further fact that American exports to all countries fell off by one-quarter in 1930, while our exports to Russia rose by practically one-half despite all obstacles. The Russians are eager to buy from us; but as Louis Fischer points out in his new book "Why Recognize Russia?" the uncertain political basis of Soviet-American trade and the frequent attacks on Russia by Hamilton Fish and others have already reduced

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the amount of buying Russians are doing here. Trade is not fostered by an atmosphere of hostility, by the spread of false news of Soviet conditions, or by the denial of credit facilities equal to those being offered elsewhere.

OUR YEARLY REMINDER of the repudiated State debts of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina is at hand in the annual report of the Council of Foreign Bondholders. It sets down the principal of those debts at $75,000,000, largely incurred for railroad guaranties, and adds an estimated $262,000,000 for interest. The federal government has steadfastly refused to assume any responsibility for these debts. While the cases are by no means parallel, there is an interesting contrast in the recent action of the Australian Commonwealth government in paying the interest due from New South Wales in London on April 1, which New South Wales refused to meet. A special dispatch to the New York *Times* says: "At a conference at The Hague this month the consensus of international opinion on the question generally, without special reference to America, was in favor of federal responsibility for the acts of component states." The United States cites Russian repudiation as a reason for refusing recognition; the Soviet government retorts by citing American State precedents; and the Council of Foreign Bondholders with a singular inability to make fine moral distinctions comments: "The council has pointed out that that abuse of state powers which takes the form of repudiation of public debt is found only in parts of the United States and in Communist Russia."

GOVERNOR ROOSEVELT'S recent judicial appointments in New York State have met with general commendation. In naming Edward R. Finch, senior member of the Appellate Division, as presiding justice he has disregarded partisanship—a course that ought to be taken for granted in choosing judges but unfortunately cannot be. Justice Townley is promoted from the Supreme Court to the Appellate Division, and Edward S. Dore, a prominent member of Tammany, indorsed by both the Bar Association and the judiciary committee of the New York County Lawyers' Association, is appointed to the Supreme Court. Chief Magistrate Joseph E. Corrigan of New York City, of like political affiliations with Mr. Dore and similarly indorsed, receives a well-deserved promotion to the Court of General Sessions. Chief Magistrate Corrigan has been doing admirable work in the hard and thankless task of cleaning up the magistrates' courts of New York City, not hesitating, if necessary, to offend political leaders in the process. There will be general approval of his promotion, but coupled with it a feeling of regret that both his professional associates and the Governor should have felt constrained to call him from his present important work in the very midst of his activities.

A PREPOSTEROUS PERFORMANCE is now being staged by the American consul at Vancouver, B. C., in the case of Miss Ella Young, who seeks admission to the United States. Miss Young is an Irish poet and lecturer, an authority on Celtic mythology, and the author of several books published in this country. From October, 1925, to November, 1930, she remained in the United States on a visa that was extended from time to time; last November, believing that she might cross over into Canada and be readmitted under the British quota, she voluntarily left California seven months before her latest permit should expire. When she attempted to reenter she was refused a visa on the ground that she might become a public charge, although for five years she had supported herself very competently here. Various influential citizens of California, including Senator Shortridge, M. Fleishhacker, president of the Anglo-California Trust Company, Bertram E. Alanson, president of the San Francisco Stock Exchange, Colonel Charles Erskine Scott Wood, and other well-known professional and business men have issued a statement declaring that it is their earnest belief that there is not "the slightest risk of her ever becoming a public charge on the United States or any State or any one." To these protests A. Dana Hodgdon, chief of the Visa Division of the State Department, replies first that consular officers are left substantially to their own discretion and adds:

> After a careful consideration of Miss Young's case, the conclusion reached by the responsible consular officer was that in the light of the present economic situation in the United States she was not in a position to overcome the presumption that . . . she was likely to become a public charge. . . . Although due consideration was given to the fact that Miss Young's cash assets amounted to $1,500 and her income to $500 a year from royalties [and $1,300 from lectures], these amounts could not be considered sufficient inasmuch as at her age [66 years] she might become helpless through illness . . . resulting in a rapid consumption of her assets and a depletion of her earning capacity.

And there, for the moment, the matter rests. One would like at least to be able to believe Miss Young's case an extraordinary one. But apparently it is merely an example of our everyday treatment of aliens who seek admission to and naturalization in the United States.

THE MOST INTERESTING feature about the million dollars just given by Gustav Oberlaender to further American-German understanding and amity is that the principal and interest of the fund is to be entirely expended in twenty-five years. Mr. Oberlaender desires his money to be spent by students and public men who wish to engage "in research work that is of special interest to the American people, and those who are interested in such subjects as employment insurance, old-age insurance, public health, race relations, music, art, or any other activities of a kindred nature, and who will profit by a period of study in a German-speaking country." These stipulations cover an almost unlimited field and doubtless will result in the completion of much valuable work. The fund is to be administered under the Carl Schurz Foundation, and under the immediate trusteeship, in addition to that of Mr. Oberlaender himself, of Carl W. Ackerman, dean of the Columbia School of Journalism, Dr. Haven Emerson, Henry Allen Moe, secretary of the Guggenheim Foundation, and Wilbur K. Thomas, executive director of the Carl Schurz Fund. But Mr. Oberlaender has wisely refused to give his money in perpetuum. No one can tell what the future may have in store; indeed, such a fund, given twenty-five years ago, would have suffered sad sea-changes in the succeeding quarter-century. International amity can best be furthered during peace time.

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Deficits or Taxes

THE position of the Treasury grows continually worse. The original budget estimates forecast a surplus of $123,000,000 for the present fiscal year. By the beginning of December the Treasury had discovered that there would be a deficit of $180,000,000 instead, and now, with three-fourths of the year gone, it is agreed that the deficit will approach $800,000,000. Receipts during the first nine months of the year have been $510,000,000 less than in the corresponding period of 1929-30, and expenditures about $194,000,000 greater, and the remaining three months are certain to add heavily to the $600,000,000 deficit that now exists. The long period of Treasury surpluses is plainly over. From 1920 to 1930 they totaled about $4,000,000,000, nearly all of which was wisely devoted to reducing the public debt. During the present year we shall actually increase public indebtedness. It is plainly time for a serious consideration of fiscal policy.

Unfortunately, instead of facing the situation like a statesman, and inviting his countrymen to think soberly what ought to be done, the President makes a political plea. On March 31 he said:

> There will be no increase of taxes if the next Congress imposes no increases upon the budget which the Administration will present. But for Congress to do this, the people must cooperate to effectively discourage and postpone consideration of sectional and group interests.

This is political claptrap, and nothing else. The President knows, just as everybody else does, that there will almost certainly be another deficit in 1931-32 despite all reasonable care in expenditures; just as he knows, or ought to know, that Congress in the past session actually appropriated some $28,000,000 less than the budget officers recommended. The President's statement is simply an attempt, and a shabby one, to shift to Congress in advance the blame for the anticipated deficit, and an effort to prejudice public opinion in advance against any expenditures the President may see fit to oppose, whether unemployment or farm relief or something else, as "the demands of sectional and group interests." It is a time, certainly, for the most careful weighing of all expenditures, but no time for refusing to make socially necessary outgo because it may necessitate tax increase. It is no time for giving heed to Calvin Coolidge's parrot cry of "no extra Congress, no extra taxes, and no extra politics."

The President and his supporters propose a policy of drift in the hope that things will turn for the better. This is fatuous action. Interest payments of foreign governments have already been diverted from debt payment to current expenditures, and there is disturbing talk of cutting down the cumulative sinking-fund requirement by means of which we are now wisely clearing away $400,000,000 a year of the public debt. Nothing could be more foolish in a rich country like this. We have no need, and we cannot afford, in any way to injure public credit, thus raising the rate of interest on public securities and the consequent burden of interest on the public debt. Let the Treasury meet this year's deficit by short-term borrowing as it must; it will simply face another shortage next year. This cannot go on indefinitely. It is a time for tax increase, despite the politicians' anxiety to avoid it.

Where should the increased revenue come from? Out of higher individual income and estate taxes. We have really only started to use these powerful modern fiscal engines. In 1929 customs yielded $602,000,000, miscellaneous internal-revenue taxes (mostly on tobacco) $480,000,000, the corporation income tax $1,236,000,000, individual income tax $1,095,000,000, and estate tax (on inheritances) $65,000,000. Taxes on consumption (customs and tobacco taxes) and corporation income taxes thus yield two-thirds of the federal revenue. Their ultimate incidence has no discoverable relation to individual ability to pay; but individual income and inheritance taxes rest chiefly on the richer part of the community.

Estate taxes are too low. On the 8,582 estates reported in 1929 the total taxes, both State and federal, averaged less than 4½ per cent, and even on the 16 estates of more than $10,000,000 they amounted to less than 18 per cent. Foreign experience indicates clearly the advantage of distinctly higher rates.

The income-tax situation is no less striking. In 1928 4,070,851 persons filed returns, of whom 2,523,063 paid income taxes in a total amount of $1,164,000,000. At the outside, not one family in ten paid any income tax. But out of the four millions reporting, the more than three millions whose net income was less than $5,000 paid only $13,000,000 tax, and the added 628,000 with incomes between $5,000 and $10,000 paid but $23,000,000 more, so that actually 97 per cent of the entire income tax was paid by persons with net incomes of $10,000 up. In fact, $909,000,000, or four-fifths of the whole, was paid by those with net incomes in excess of $50,000. Our income tax today is in truth a tax on the rich, and in minor degree on the well-to-do; as such, it contrasts favorably, in its effects on distribution, with the other federal taxes, the bulk of which come ultimately from the great mass of the poor and the less well-to-do. We are not within sight of the limit of its possibilities. Notwithstanding all the buncombe spread abroad by Mr. Mellon and his newspaper allies during the years when he was reducing rates, there is not a shred of evidence to show that rates could not be markedly raised without appreciably increasing evasion. The tax even on our 511 income millionaires in 1928 was not equal to 17 per cent of their income. Compare the British rates if there is any question what taxes can be collected. Our surtax rates ought to be graded upward more sharply, and we ought to get a larger proportion of federal revenue from the personal income tax, practically the whole burden of which, as we have indicated, is borne today by the well-to-do and the wealthy, and the greater part of it by the very rich. An intelligent democracy will consider not only the revenue results, but also the inevitable social consequences of its taxes. From that point of view, the income tax is a good tax. It remains to be seen whether the people will yield to the clamor of the President and his supporters and let themselves be prevented from making further intelligent use of it.

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Mr. Hoover in Action

WE had just about given up hope that Mr. Hoover would ever again respond sympathetically and intelligently to the needs of his suffering fellowmen when along came the Nicaraguan earthquake and presented him with an opportunity to prove that he is still the world's greatest living humanitarian. Said the New York *Times* in a Washington dispatch the morning after the Managua tragedy:

> President Hoover had no sooner been informed of the disaster at Managua than he took personal charge of relief measures. This was right in line with his experience in relieving distress in Belgium, Russia, and other countries in Europe and in the flood-stricken area of the Mississippi Valley. Within a few minutes after word came that the Nicaraguan capital had been destroyed by earthquake, the machinery of the government and the American Red Cross was in operation.

Here is an example of the great humanitarian at his best. From a foreign shore comes a cry for help, and Mr. Hoover swings immediately into action, asks no one's permission, tarries not a moment to examine into the theoretical side of his decision, does not even stop to inquire whether "self-help" would not be better than American dollars in relieving the suffering in Nicaragua. We wonder just what it is in the appeal of a foreigner that manages to strike a responsive chord in Mr. Hoover's heart, when millions of Americans can go clamoring for food without drawing more from the President than an impatient reminder that Americans must take care of themselves. Why should Belgians, or Russians, or Nicaraguans receive more consideration from this man, who is acting not in the role of an independent philanthropist but as President of the United States, than do the millions of jobless workers and distressed farmers in his own country? These people, too, are in trouble; they, too, are suffering from lack of food and clothing. Is their predicament not also a calamity, and a calamity that is much closer to home? If Mr. Hoover would examine their situation more closely and honestly, he would find it so, and he would further find that their suffering is of a character that bodes no good for the existing order (of which Mr. Hoover is the staunchest defender), should adequate relief and assistance much longer be withheld from them.

Mr. Hoover's moment for action in the domestic situation came immediately after the stock-market crash in the fall of 1929. It is true, of course, that he did initiate certain "voluntary measures of cooperation," to use his own words, "to make certain that fundamental businesses of the country shall continue as usual," and "that wages and therefore consuming power shall not be reduced." But this hardly sounds like the man of action pictured in the *Times* dispatch quoted above. Furthermore, in his message to Congress on December 3, 1929, he asserted that "the test and the rightfulness of our decisions must be whether we have sustained and advanced... prosperity and the lessening of poverty." Certainly not even Mr. Hoover will argue that we are more prosperous today than we were on December 3, 1929. By his own standards, the action taken eighteen months ago was wholly inadequate to cope with the ever-widening needs of the depression. A year later Senators La Follette and Walsh collected and published an immense volume of indisputable proof that millions of Americans were in pressing need of relief. Did Mr. Hoover, when informed of this disaster, take "personal charge of relief measures"? He did nothing of the kind. Instead, he did everything he could to block relief, until his evasive tactics could no longer withstand the adverse publicity he thereby drew down upon his head. Finally, he vetoed the Wagner employment-exchange bill, the only measure that could have passed the Hoover-controlled House of Representatives in the last Congress that would in any way have helped in the present situation.

Thus has the President hastened to help his fellow-countrymen. Yet there is still an opportunity, though a rapidly vanishing one, for him to take that spirited and generous action which the American crisis demands. For the moment, with Congress in recess, Mr. Hoover enjoys powers that verge on the dictatorial. His is the sole responsibility; he no longer shares it with Congress. Now let him show the country what he can do in an emergency; let him prove to us that he is big enough and capable enough to initiate and encourage relief for the six million unemployed, the seven or eight additional million who are working on part time and at greatly reduced wages, and their twenty or twenty-five million dependents. Let him start doing this, not in May, or June, or September, but now. If he has no plan of action, if his expansive promises of eighteen months ago were just so much buncombe, then let him surrender his power at once by calling Congress into session. Any other course will be a betrayal of the people that may prove perilous for Herbert Hoover and his kind.

Talking About Wheat

ONLY a confirmed optimist could have expected that the world wheat conference which closed its sessions at Rome on April 2 would be able to dispose of the difficulties presented by the world wheat situation. The wheat problem, whatever it is, is obviously too complicated to be solved in a few days of deliberation, even with representatives of forty-six countries devoting themselves to the task. There should be no surprise, then, that the recommendations of the conference went no farther than well-meant suggestions likely, if adopted, to ease the strain a little without answering any really primary question.

The most important result of the conference was its revelation of the complete lack of agreement among the wheat-producing and wheat-consuming nations regarding either the causes of the present crisis or the means by which it might be dispelled and its recurrence avoided. Before the conference began, preliminary discussions made clear a wide rift, amounting virtually to an impasse, between those who insisted that the world was growing too much wheat and those who insisted that it was using too little. Premier Mussolini, in his opening address, aligned himself with those who maintained that the trouble was not with overproduction but with underconsumption, and warned the conference to be cautious about recommending a general reduction of acreage, especially while so many people were suffering from want of food. The Russians, on the other hand, not only declared

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firmly that Russia would not restrict production, but ridiculed the idea of urging people to use more wheat when they had nothing with which to buy it; while the Canadian representative pointed out that even if a reduction of acreage were desirable, no democratic country could bring it about by governmental fiat. The upshot of the debate at this point was a gentle pronouncement in favor of persuasion—a harmless counsel to which no one could object.

The question of underconsumption, though less contentious, did not lend itself any more easily to practical treatment. The Russian gibe that unemployment, business depression, and an "eat-more-wheat" policy did not go well together was unanswerable. The only hopeful outlook lay in the possibility of developing a demand for wheat in countries which, like China, do not now use it to any great extent. The conference, accordingly, gave its approval to propaganda, attaching thereto a suggestion that surplus wheat might well be sold to China at a very low price. Just how this mixture of economics and humanitarianism was to be handled was not indicated.

Faced with the conclusion that unrestricted production, save for voluntary curtailment, was likely to go on and that increased consumption offered no immediate remedy, the conference turned to the question of regulating the wheat trade. The Danubian countries demanded preferential tariffs as a protection against Russian dumping and disastrous importations from Argentina and other overseas producing countries. The Rumanian Minister of Agriculture went so far as to predict a united closing of European markets if overseas countries did not waive their most-favored-nation privileges and allow preferential tariffs to be set up. The tariff suggestion proved especially irritating to the Russians, and led the Argentine ambassador at Rome to remind the conference that the world wheat crisis, while attributable in part to Russia, was also to be charged to the economic derangement of Europe by the World War and to the European policy of high protection. The conference could only decide that, not being an international tariff commission, it must leave the tariff issue to the regular course of diplomatic negotiation.

The Russian shadow overhung the conference from the beginning, and it was Russia that stood out most conspicuously and threateningly at the close. Back of the resentment at Russian dumping was a recognition of the fact that Russia, by abolishing the middleman, had gained an impressive advantage over all its competitors, and that as long as Russia was compelled to export large quantities of wheat to pay for manufactured articles bought abroad, the competition of low-priced Russian wheat would have to be reckoned with. Western capitalism and Russian collectivism, in other words, locked horns, and in the presence of that conflict the conference was helpless. The only practical suggestion was the approval of financial aid to wheat-growers to enable them to carry their crops through periods of exceptionally low prices—a proposal which, save for its restriction to short-term credits instead of credits of longer term, appears to run on all fours with the International Institute for Agricultural Credits which the League of Nations is promoting. Whether the conference of wheat-producing nations which is to meet at London in May will be able to get any farther remains to be seen.

The Layman Rebels

WHEN it was first announced that John D. Rockefeller, Jr., had appropriated $250,000,000 for the building of an amusement center covering three blocks in the heart of New York City, many a harassed metropolite dived into his subway hole with a lighter heart. His city's irresponsible hodge-podge of unplanned brick and stone that took any shape it pleased and changed its shape half a dozen times within a short block ceased to trouble him so much. Let Chrysler wave its silly silver plume; let them spoil the Empire State building with a trick mooring mast. In the midst of New York would rise a miniature model city to show the way. There would be a skyscraper, of course, but not more than one, and that one would be set like a jewel in a wide green space so big that there would be at least standing room at its base for all who worked in it. Given $250,000,000 there could be created a city of such simplicity, such poise, such spaciousness and rest that it would take ten years off the city dweller's age.

The plans of Radio City were announced, with pictures, on March 6. And the howls of the populace have been rising ever since. Architects have contributed more dignified criticism; newspapers have complained in judicious editorials; but the people who write letters to the papers have been neither dignified nor judicious. Ugly, futile, stupid; disgraceful symbol of a generation; a garment center surrounding a hatbox; hideous; gas-house architecture; and so on.

We wish we could defend the plans of Radio City. We can't. To us Radio City looks like the first six radio "hours" on Sunday morning congealed forever in stone. The elliptical building, which has become better known in the correspondence columns as the gas-house, has nothing to recommend it except, perhaps, that having no corners it will be easy to wash. The worst thing about Radio City, however, is that it has no more apparent unity than any other three city blocks. And as for that spaciousness, simplicity, and rest we dreamed of, what have we? For spaciousness we have one tiny plaza occupying one-tenth or less of the space—the rest is solid buildings, nine of them in three blocks, including three skyscrapers! For simplicity we are given barrenness. For poise and restfulness—we would rather not go into that.

The architects responsible have made various answers to the critics: Radio City must be economically as well as artistically sound; beauty must be sacrificed to utility. But the layman refuses to believe either excuse and continues to complain. Which leads us up to the two most interesting and, happily, cheerful aspects of the controversy.

In the first place the layman has rebelled. In no uncertain terms he has asserted his feelings without apology or hesitation. After all, laymen must live with and in Radio City—it is no private museum piece to be avoided at will. It is entirely right and proper that laymen should say what they think about it. In the second place the rebellion has been effective. While the architects responsible have made answer to their critics, they have been singularly reasonable—so reasonable in fact that it is now announced that new plans are to be worked out. We hope they will be more satisfactory.

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Arnold Bennett

By DOROTHY VAN DOREN

BY his death at London on March 27, Arnold Bennett has passed at once from the status of a writer of the most compelling contemporaneity to that of a classic. For nearly thirty years we have not been surprised at receiving from Mr. Bennett's hands a novel that was far above the ordinary. During the same period he issued an astonishing number of capable, readable books—plays, essays, novels that he called "fantasias," novels that were plainly potboilers, notes on how to live that sold hundreds of thousands of copies. It is the more extraordinary that out of all this welter of words so many should have been fine; that Mr. Bennett, writing steadily, relentlessly, remuneratively, should at the same time have written greatly; that the decade and a half which produced twenty-eight novels, eleven plays, and about a score of other books should also have produced two novels —"Clayhanger" and "The Old Wives' Tale"—which rank among the finest English novels of any period.

It is perhaps worth while to consider what manner of man it was who could perform such feats of quantity and quality. Mr. Bennett says of himself that he prayed to be delivered alike from idleness and from poverty. He came honestly enough by these standards of industry, and in his novels about the Five Towns district of England—which means in two-thirds of his best novels—he stresses the inescapable importance of money. He himself did not grow up in poverty; his father was a middle-class solicitor who kept his family comfortable enough; the son was sent to the Endowed Middle School at Newcastle-under-Lyme, and thence to London University in 1885. By 1889 he had quit the Five Towns and gone to live in London, where he was occupied as a solicitor's clerk, and "combined cunning in the preparation of costs with a hundred and thirty words a minute at shorthand," not to mention the not inconsiderable stipend of £200 a year. Within the next ten years he had departed forever from the law and had definitely become a journalist, and his prodigious energy had already shown itself. He could say at the end of 1899 that he had averaged nearly a thousand words a day for a year, and if practice means anything, he should have been well on the way to acquiring the facility and skill which was to serve him in his finest books. He described himself with evident truth when he said that his three major qualities were:

> First, an omnivorous and tenacious memory—the kind of memory that remembers how much London spends per day in cab fares just as easily as the order of Shakespeare's plays or the stock anecdotes of Shelley and Byron. Second, a naturally sound taste in literature. And third, the invaluable, despicable, disingenuous journalistic faculty of seeming to know much more than one does know.

He might have added a precise and penetrating observation. The observation and the memory were alike exercised on the Five Towns, that section of England which has remained so exclusively English and so incurably provincial. The pottery towns of Staffordshire had embraced industrialism in its first youth and they were in no hurry to adopt any more modern innovations. The potteries and the mines flourished, therefore; the workers went on their first abortive strikes to loose themselves from a thirteen-hour day for old and young and to demand wages large enough to keep breath in them; the towns suffered smoke, filth, brutality, restraint. And in the midst of this sat the middle class, the employers, the fortunate ones, calm, temperate, decent, hard-working, frugal—above all, frugal. To this class Mr. Bennett belonged; and he has given it immortality.

His first novel of the Five Towns was written in 1902. "Anna of the Five Towns" is Mr. Bennett's first attempt to write a "serious" novel on a large scale. But even while this work was being written he was thinking of other and still more serious attempts to portray the locality of his childhood. "The Old Wives' Tale" in 1908 was the result of many years of thought upon a particular milieu. It displayed, indeed, an inability to escape from the milieu. For here was the Five Towns—smoke, industry, restraint, frugality, and all; and, incidentally, here was life, unmistakable, pitiable, touching and uplifting the heart. Mr. Bennett declared that he first conceived the plot of "The Old Wives' Tale" when he saw a plain, stout, elderly woman enter a restaurant in Paris and heard her subjected to the laughter of the pretty young waitress. He saw in her "a heartrending novel"; she had once been young and was now old and pitiful. That was the novel he resolved to write. The story of Constance and Sophia Baines, daughters of the draper in St. Luke's Square, Bursley, was the result. They progressed from all that was young and promising and lovely to a futile and unwanted old age. They grew up and grew old and died. They married and one of them bore a son and they were widowed. The younger, Sophia, having run off with a commercial traveler who turned out to be a rascal and left her, lived through the siege of Paris in 1870 and emerged financially triumphant; the other hardly left Bursley, where she had been born and raised. But Sophia, taking part in the Franco-German war, was untouched by it; her Bursley virtues of frugality and industry kept her as firm and unassailed as her sister Constance was, living out her life in the house in St. Luke's Square. Paris might have been the Five Towns, for all the difference in her life its strangeness made. And if Constance and Sophia Baines are the heroines of the novel, the house and shop in St. Luke's Square is the hero. It was dark, inconvenient, ugly; it was immaculately, painfully "well-kept"; it was in a sort of way comfortable. And it is real. Nevertheless, only a great writer could have taken this material, so commonplace, so dull, so undramatic, so unbeautiful, and transmuted it into compelling life. If we could meet Constance tomorrow, either in her pretty, compliant girlhood or in her fat, pain-ridden, helpless old age, we should probably flee from her. But her creator made not only the good-natured, rather stupid girl and the gently obstinate old woman, he made also the pathos and the drama and the pity and heartbreak of a long life, not one of the details of which can be doubted or laid aside as irrelevant.

"The Old Wives' Tale" is generally considered to be Mr. Bennett's finest book. I should place "Clayhanger"

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above it. Written two years later, it, too, is located in the Five Towns, only a block or two away from Mr. Baines's draper's shop. It describes the life of Edwin Clayhanger from his departure from school at sixteen to his marriage at forty. Many persons live in its pages: Darius Clayhanger, Edwin's father; Maggie, his sister; Janet Orgreave, who "waited" for him in vain; Hilda Lessways, who jilted him because she couldn't help it and later became his wife; Big James, he of the brown beard and magnificent bass voice and gentle heart. "Clayhanger" has a quality of reality that is unique in English fiction. Clayhanger himself is more real than the man you will meet tomorrow on the street; because the man on the street has his secret life, and those who meet him cannot penetrate it; but Clayhanger's secret life, which nobody in the novel knows but himself, is revealed to the reader in all its pitiful or admirable or futile or triumphant details. Clayhanger the schoolboy, resolving to begin at once the full exercise of his powers, to achieve self-perfection in spite of his shortcomings; Clayhanger the youth, afraid of his father, afraid to speak what is in his mind, unwilling to enter his father's shop yet entering it, fitting at last securely into the routine of the printing business; Clayhanger the man, trying to overcome his shyness, reading, pondering, settling into a rut of meticulous regularity, and jerked out of that rut twice by Hilda, the strange, intense, inexplicable woman whom he loves. This is life, made fuller and richer and more credible than life by the mystery of art. This is the complete mind and heart of a man, as every man knows his own mind and heart and none other.

There are many other aspects of the novel nearly as incomparable as the portrait of Clayhanger: his father's terrible childhood on the pot-banks, working eighteen hours a day at the age of seven, and staying for a brief, indescribably horrible night at the poorhouse; and Darius's disintegration and death; and the boy George; and the full, gay, vigorous life of the Orgreaves, so bitterly in contrast to the restraint and intellectual poverty of the Clayhangers; and the life of the town, real, sharp, indubitable. "Clayhanger" is the first and best of a trilogy about Edwin and Hilda; it gains some strength by those novels that follow it, by its very length and fulness. But alone I believe it has not been surpassed by any English novel since "Vanity Fair." I am aware that such a sweeping judgment is perhaps as unwise as it is dangerous. I shall be reminded reproachfully of Charlotte Brontë and George Eliot and Meredith and Hardy. Cheerfully I sacrifice them and deposit them and all their works in second place. Dickens gives me pause and the question reduces itself to a matter of personal taste. I prefer "Clayhanger" to any single novel of Dickens. The bulk of Dickens's work may very well endure longer than the bulk of Bennett's. But that is another matter.

From a rereading of "The Old Wives' Tale" and "Clayhanger" it becomes clear what are Mr. Bennett's characteristics as a writer. First, the fulness and correctness of his observation; second, his willingness to set down everything about his characters, whether flattering or not; third, his relentless preoccupation with money. The preoccupation with money is the most striking of his interests. In every novel it is apparent; in "Riceyman Steps" it reaches its climax with a frank study of avarice. But if Mr. Earlforward is the extreme example of this passion to save money, Sophia and Constance are themselves impressive illustrations of it. Sophia's burning passion during her hard months in the Paris siege was for the accumulation of a competence; Constance in her old age, although by her own and even by more worldly standards she was rich, handled every sixpence as if it had been her last. The Clayhangers had bread and tea for their evening meal, and old Darius was horrified when his daughter dared to add meat, though they could well afford it. When Edwin was thirty and thinking of getting married, his father would raise his wages to a bare pound a week, although the young man was manager of the business and second in importance only to his father. Edwin himself was scandalized by the lavishness of the Orgreave tea, when jams and meat and a fruit pie loaded the table. Sophia Baines despised her young husband for a fool because he ran through a fortune in four years. The same motif appears in the lesser novels. "Buried Alive," the story of a great painter who, out of his excessive shyness, tried to pretend himself dead, is concerned over and over with extravagance, the exact price of article after article, the proper uses of wealth. Extravagance is the greatest vice. A decent attempt to save money is the supreme virtue. It may be that Mr. Bennett came to this conclusion after reading Balzac, whom he enormously admired; it may be that his boyhood in the Five Towns, where frugality was so patently wise and a spendthrift would so surely end in the gutter, influenced him not only to desire money for himself but constantly to write about it. Money, indeed, in these books is a consuming passion; love is almost always secondary to it. Love is restrained, considered, sober. Young, romantic love is on the whole foolish. Even in "Clayhanger" the unmistakably compelling love of Edwin and Hilda is described temperately and with sanity.

It is this temperateness and sanity, indeed, that separates Mr. Bennett from the first and greatest novelists. Nowhere in the novels is there a trace of the fire, the gusto, the passion, the unadulterated rhetoric that burn in "The Idiot," in "Anna Karenina," in "Tom Jones," in Thackeray at his best, in "Moby Dick." The highest compliment one can pay to Mr. Bennett is to say he is not quite in this company. His tone is level and composed. He will tell everything; but he will not raise his voice. He will not throw his scruples to the winds and dare all. Extravagance is a vice. Only a fool throws away his money, only a reckless, hot-headed incompetent will fail to keep for himself those reservations which an honest man needs to keep in order to live a creditable life and die a decent death. The middle ground is the safe ground; do not throw away your resources; do not passionately clutch them until you die of want. And it may be said of Mr. Bennett that he made the middle ground, the temperate, decent life more moving than any other writer has ever made it. To be clean, to be hard-working, to be honest, to be not necessarily kind but just—this is not, with Mr. Bennett, to be also dull. Here, probably, is the astonishing source of his power. It would be incomplete not to add that he possesses the saving grace of an ironical and sometimes mordant humor. Life is not quite tragic; it is more than comic; it seems to have no meaning, yet the meaning is there—in its fulness, in its variety, in the inescapable movement of one year after the other. Everything is the same and everything is changing. People are as they are. Mr. Bennett has shown that what they are is good.

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Aid for the Jobless—or an Alibi?

By DEVERE ALLEN

Hyères, France, March 21

WHEN President Hoover's interest in foreign methods of unemployment relief was revealed by the dispatch of the official investigating expedition of Mr. John J. Leary, Jr., there were quiet smiles in Europe. Over here not the least humorous thing about American politics is our famed engineer's way of tackling problems by making an elaborate survey of the means by which they may be dodged. In labor circles, especially, there is sardonic wonderment as to what Mr. Hoover, who cannot tolerate anything that smacks of socialism, expects to find in countries where unemployment relief has taken a course conspicuously divergent from rugged individualism.

As Mr. Leary chats with the devoted readers of the *Telegraph* and *Morning Post* and discovers that the cost of unemployment insurance is a growing and tremendous drain upon the state, it is to be hoped that he will also take into account the fact that England, with almost 2,700,000 jobless workers, is still a country without bread lines. And if he is bothered because there have been abuses of the insurance plan, and because in truth a few men have passed up jobs they might have taken, he will do well to notice the cases in which men have had to choose between living on twenty-eight shillings a week without labor and working forty-five hours a week for thirty-one shillings, with no free transportation to and from their homes.

If Mr. Leary finds business men who can pull long faces and still enjoy it better than pulling longer ones, they will confide that although they hate like everything to keep up the dole—they will call it that—it was either dole or revolution. For Mr. Leary's notebook the following words from the *Manchester Guardian* might not be inappropriate: "America offers at least one lesson to those who denounce 'the dole' as the source of all our evils. Over there a man who is out of work has two resources on which to fall back —private charity or crime. Charity is limited. The opportunities for crime are not." And the *Guardian* is right, even allowing for those special areas where our vigilant police reserve the choicest pickings for themselves.

Apart from Hollywood, which is always a journalistic standby when events are dull in other quarters of the cosmos, American crime was until recently our most relished news in Europe. On the Continent, where you can buy Nick Carter, the Bradys, and Jesse James in several languages, daily headlines shrieked forth the latest amenities of life in Bill Thompson's bower, while the newest bedtime stories from Tammany Hall's domain embellished front pages from Moscow and Munich to Paris and Madrid. But crime stories are giving way; the American collapse, even if it carried the fortunes of Europe down to a more horrendous level, has brought with it a redeeming chance for laughter at the inanity of our officialdom. The leaders of French industry have not been slow to point out the wisdom of their resistance against the marvels of speed-up; the Germans have begun to doubt the virtues of mere industrial efficiency as a cure-all for their ills. Britain, where traditional ruts are unquestionably a curse, is in danger of growing still more deeply intrenched in antiquated production methods, including low wage scales, because of our egregious muddling. In every place there are doubts of things American. But regarding our "method" of relieving unemployment, doubt is too mild a word; amazement would be truer.

Unemployment insurance in Europe, though still inadequate and not universal, is firmly imbedded in the fabric of the common life. Other forms of social insurance, in which we have been laggard, were established long before the war, and have since made rapid progress. Germany's act of 1889 for old-age and invalidity insurance was extended in 1911 to cover pensions for salaried workers. Provision for limited forms of insurance was made by France in 1910, and almost simultaneously insurance acts—pensions or sickness or old age—were passed in Great Britain, Luxembourg, Rumania, Sweden, and Holland. Since the war new insurance of this character or extensions of old programs have been instituted by Spain, Italy, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czecho-Slovakia, Great Britain, Poland, Hungary, and France.

The International Labor Office in a recent report looks back on this steady march of social insurance and holds that the compulsory feature is essential. "Social insurance," it states, in the calmest sort of faith, "will no doubt continue its development as a compulsory system until it is universally adopted." If this be prophecy, something must give way. Can it be that the mounting effects of the world crisis will generate, even in America, a popular perception that the risks of competitive life are so great as to warrant a change toward social control? The recent progress of old-age pensions is, perhaps, a reassuring portent. It is less reassuring to reflect that while our unemployed still go without anything to hold body and soul together except what is brought them on the winds of chance, the White House has to wait for an emissary to find out what is already well known and available for the asking. Mr. H. B. Butler, deputy director of the International Labor Office, has completed a fair and detailed study of American unemployment. For a long time the staff at Geneva have had their fingers on every feature of the relief plans of every country. They could tell Mr. Leary all he needs to know. Perhaps they cannot tell him what he wants to know. They will not be able to tell him how, in any country under the sun, successful relief for acute unemployment can be effected through enlightened charity alone, or through private agencies working strictly in keeping with a competitive economy.

Nobody contends that because a scheme exists it operates everywhere in absolute perfection; nobody believes that widespread distress can be entirely overcome by social insurance alone, no matter on what scale. Nobody thinks that unemployment relief can be put through without upsetting the routine of life for some of the more privileged classes. Nevertheless, taking unemployment insurance specifically, as the form of social insurance which most urgently affects

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the present suffering millions, its benefits have been incalculable. In more than one country, hard though conditions are, any sustained economic cohesion has been possible only because collective intelligence has been marshaled for collective protection. To see how significant a factor unemployment insurance really is, one must realize its enormous growth.

In 1919 the workers insured against unemployment numbered between 4,500,000 and 5,000,000. At that time Great Britain was the only country where unemployment insurance was compulsory, and even there compulsion was limited to certain industries. Today, however, a compulsory system exists in ten countries, bringing a measure of protection, if the other countries with voluntary systems are added in, to more than 47,500,000 wage-earners. Of these, nearly 45,000,000 are located in Germany, Great Britain, Russia, Austria, Italy, Poland, Bulgaria, Australia (Queensland), Irish Free State, and Switzerland (nine cantons), where compulsory systems are established. In the Soviet Union 10,000,000 workers are ordinarily affected by unemployment insurance, though since October 9 last benefits have been suspended owing to the state of the labor market and the new ruling compelling laborers to accept jobs distant from their homes. Yet, deducting these 10,000,000, no fewer than 35,000,000 workers, thanks to compulsory unemployment insurance, are being aided who would otherwise be left to chance charity or starvation. Is this the method, demonstrably successful, in which the President is interested?

At the final session of the unemployment conference called by the International Labor Office last January, which I attended, the problem was sharply focused in a manner that epitomized our own conditions. A French employer, elaborating with hard realism the need of industrialists to rule in their own house, dwelt upon the desirability of freedom from too strenuous social demands. Poulson, the delegate of British labor, challenged this whole conception. The issue, he said—forcefully and accurately, though with little originality—was the old, old struggle between the right of a few to use human beings for profit and the right of the many to control society for the well-being of all. It is, of course, however old it sounds, the basic issue everywhere.

To the extent of protecting nearly 50,000,000 human beings against reliance on the dole of charity, world capitalism has yielded to the workers' pressure. But there are many men in all countries for whom American individualism is still the last strong bulwark, who understand that the beginnings of social control in our country mean the abridgment, then the destruction, of the right of financial and commercial groups to control society by their own superior brains. To this body of stalwart individualists Mr. Hoover has belonged, both by obligation and by personal conviction.

Why then, all Europe wonders, seek light from countries whose socialized methods only prove, by the Hoover standard, their flabby, weak degeneration? Where will Mr. Leary get his aid and counsel? Does the President genuinely want help, or does he seek new reasons for evasion?

Lawrence Decides

By ROBERT A. BAKEMAN

Lawrence, Massachusetts, April 1

LAWRENCE, Massachusetts, built around numberless cotton and woolen mills on the Merrimac River, has definitely decided that the National Textile Workers Union shall not be allowed to exist within its borders. The question of whether or not the workers in the textile mills want to organize under this form of union has been brushed aside. Notice has been bluntly served by the officials of the city, aided by federal authorities, through a series of spectacular acts that have swept away every semblance of civil liberty, that the right of laborers to organize, which has been upheld by our highest courts, will be denied to the workers of Lawrence if they insist upon affiliating themselves with the National Textile Workers Union.

This is the heart of the present situation in Lawrence. It is no longer the question of who was right in the recent strike—employer or employee. It is not even the question of whether textile workers should be organized into a conservative or a radical labor union. It is the far more fundamental question of whether workers shall be free to organize themselves for collective bargaining with their employers under whatever auspices they please, without the arbitrary and unlawful interference of the police, whose primary job it is to protect the civil rights of all.

For several years the textile industry, hard hit by changing conditions, has been attempting to reduce expenses and at the same time increase production. This has meant the introduction of efficiency experts and their subsequent recommendations for the speeding up of machinery. The process went on until "the straw that broke the camel's back" was laid on. It resulted almost immediately in the complete closing down of the largest woolen mill in the world, along with two smaller ones.

For some months an organizer of the National Textile Workers had been in Lawrence. This was the only labor organization there, for with all its experience in industrial conflict Lawrence had not yet learned that the safety valve which will minimize social explosions in the industrial field is the labor union; and in fairness it must be added that the conservative union has not so far shown any great interest in the unskilled worker. The strikers, therefore, came in flocks to the only people that offered to organize them. In their emergency it was not a question of a conservative or a radical union. Then only did the Lawrence which had remained inactive for years, in spite of the rumblings of discontent, arouse itself. The fear of a general strike, the hysteria against "Communist activities," the memory of bitter industrial conflicts in the past, and the specter of the disappearance of the pay roll which supported the whole community led to the formation of a Citizens' Committee. The newspapers announced a concession by the American Woolen Company—the withdrawal of efficiency experts—but it was only a newspaper announcement. The strike leaders were vigorously denounced by one Roman Catholic priest,

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and colorless resolutions were passed by a body of Protestant ministers urging the strikers to go back to work. A request came from the Citizens' Committee for a vote upon the acceptance of the company's offer. This request was not acceded to as quickly as the Citizens' Committee desired, and the next day the conspiracy to rid Lawrence of the strike leaders began to unfold—a conspiracy which has not yet ceased.

On the morning of February 26, while the strike committee was in conference preparing the issues to be submitted to a ballot of the workers on the following day, and while other workers were painting the placards announcing when and where the balloting would take place, the police rushed into the headquarters of the union and arrested Patrick Devine, the national secretary. Two hours later, while the strike committee was in conference again in the same union hall, City Marshal O'Brien with a squad of officers armed with clubs rushed into the room and arrested all whom they could find, including the organizer, Edith Berkman. One of the strikers, who asked to see the warrant, was struck over the head by an officer, receiving a terrific wound which later became so infected that the victim had to be placed in the Marine Hospital in Chelsea. The head of another striker was split open, and Miss Berkman was so cruelly treated that her body was covered with bruises for many days.

That afternoon, when the attorney for the defense went to see about bail, he was informed, as he testified without contradiction in court the next day, that two charges had been brought against the five persons arrested, each one of which called for $5,000 bail. When it was hinted that the bail would be forthcoming, thus permitting the leaders to go back to the strike, two further charges were added, each also carrying $5,000 bail. This meant the raising of $20,000 for each defendant. To cap the climax, double sureties were demanded, making it necessary to pledge $40,000 worth of property for the release of each person.

One naturally asks, What was the high crime for which this unconscionable bail was demanded? And the answer is the same charge that could have been brought against any labor union anywhere that ever declared a strike against its employers: namely, (1) conspiracy to destroy the personal property of the American Woolen Company; (2) conspiracy to destroy real property of the American Woolen Company; (3) conspiracy to destroy business contracts of the American Woolen Company; (4) conspiracy to intimidate employees of the American Woolen Company.

Then the Citizens' Committee, with a strike committee of its own choosing, the leaders of the strike being safely in prison, voted to have a ballot taken of the workers. It took place two hours after the announcement had been made. At ten o'clock at night the result was announced. At four the next morning a group of newspaper reporters who had been covering the strike came into my room at the hotel and confessed what a farce the whole balloting was. Nevertheless, the next morning the headlines in all the papers announced that the workers of Lawrence had voted by a majority of four to one to go back, though the really significant news was that only 1,650 out of more than 9,000 workers on strike had voted to return, and about 7,000 had not voted at all. The bells of the churches were rung in token of the wonderful victory.

At the hearing of the arrested leaders next morning examination was waived, and the judge in charge, without hearing a word of the evidence, refused to reduce the bail and accused the defendants of coming into the community to stir up trouble and flaunt its laws. At the end of the hearing the federal authorities stepped in, and with telegraphed authority from Washington completed the job of breaking down the morale of the strikers by taking their leaders to the Immigration Detention Department at East Boston as suspicious aliens. Although $40,000 worth of property had already been put up for their appearance in court, they were kept in detention several days, and the Immigration Department demanded $5,000 more from each individual before he could have his temporary freedom. In this way was both municipal and federal machinery put into use to rid Lawrence of the leaders in the industrial strife.

But official Lawrence was not yet through with its job. On the morning of March 2 the marshal with some fifteen men rushed into the headquarters of the National Textile Workers and began searching the rooms. The records of the District Court of Lawrence reveal that no warrant was issued authorizing the search of these premises. The officers took away mimeograph machines, typewriter, books, papers, vouchers, and records of all kinds belonging to the union. The headquarters were then nailed up and remained that way until days later, when members of the union forced their way back in. A young girl, stenographer for the union, was given her choice, after a two-hour grilling, of being arrested on the charge of vagrancy or of going back to New York. She was driven in an automobile to Boston by officials and put on the New York train. A man who was found in the hall was arrested on the charge of vagrancy, and his case is still to be heard.

The next move came in the form of a notice from the owner of the building that unless the union gave up its quarters immediately, steps would be taken for an eviction. The union has a *bona fide* lease of these quarters which does not expire until February 20, 1932.

The union also had hired a hall for its mass-meetings for a period expiring on March 20. On March 6 it advertised a mass-meeting of protest against the imprisonment of its leaders. At the scheduled time of meeting, those who came were greeted by a "No Trespassing" sign and a large body of policemen. The policemen, when asked for information, said they were simply obeying the written request of the owner that there be no trespassing on his premises, but a visit to his home the next morning revealed the fact that the owner of the hall, a Syrian, had been followed to his work in Lowell by the police and had been persuaded to allow them to post the "No Trespassing" sign.

And now from the hearing before the immigration officials on the question of deportation of these people whose real crime is that they have led a strike, the report is broadcast throughout the country that members of the National Guard during the recent Lawrence textile strike were asked "if they would refuse to be true to their oath of allegiance and would lay down their arms in the event of a red riot." It is said too on the best of authority that testimony was offered at this hearing that the strikers were asked to join a rifle club and to practice at a rifle range. Apparently the authorities, both municipal and federal, are convinced that the prejudice against the reds is so deep-seated that the American people have lost perspective and even their sense of humor.

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Two significant things stand out in this story of Lawrence. First, a legal process has been invented for use in the realm of industrial conflict—a charge of conspiracy by which apparently the leaders of any strike, be it under conservative or radical auspices, can be arrested at a moment's notice and kept under impossible bail—which the Constitution of the United States forbids—until the emergency time of the strike has passed and the demoralization of the workers has been accomplished. Second, the conviction has been buried deep in the hearts and minds of thousands of those who toil that the machinery of government is for the sole use of those who possess the economic power. But of still greater concern in the recent experience in Lawrence to the student of human relations is the passing of civil liberties —freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assemblage, freedom from invasion of basic rights.

Aftermath of a Lynching

By WILLIAM PICKENS

A LYNCHING took place in Marion, Indiana, on August 7, 1930. The victims were two Negroes charged with murder; there was also what seems to have been a false charge of rape, which served to win sympathy for the lynchers. The two men were in jail and w uld have been fully punished by the State.

The trial of the second of the half-dozen or so men who were indicted for the lynching was in progress in the last week of February, 1931. And it was astonishing to see and feel the mob atmosphere that still prevailed nearly seven months after the murder. The first member of the mob to be tried had been acquitted by the jury in twenty minutes. Against the second, Charles Lennon, there was enough evidence to hang ten men. Seven reputable citizens, including the sheriff from whom the prisoners had been taken, the chief of police, and two reporters of the two local papers, had definitely identified Lennon as the man who had swung the sledge hammer to break down the jail doors. And an eighth witness, who did not know him by name, described him exactly as the other seven had described him. Moreover, the witnesses for the defendant included his wife, his mother-in-law, his brother-in-law, and a "good friend," in whose testimony the prosecution pointed out many discrepancies and some absolute lies.

But it was plain that the mob spirit was dominating the trial and the court. Men who had been members of the mob packed the auditorium to the corridors, hundreds of them, every day. And a hard-faced lot they were. The better class of citizens seemed to be unconcerned about the matter; at least they were not present during the first three days of the trial. The Negroes, too, absented themselves, since they had no hope of seeing justice done, until finally a mass-meeting of Negroes was called, and the speaker, representing the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, showed the colored citizens how by their sullen and despairing absence they were leaving the whole spiritual domination of the courtroom to the mob. He urged them to attend the trial and by their very presence add their spiritual weight to the forces of prosecution.

During the last three days of the trial, therefore, Negro citizens attended in unusually large numbers. And strange to say, the rougher-looking mob element dwindled a bit among the spectators and some of the more cultured whites began to attend. On Friday afternoon, when the crowd was waiting on the deliberations of the jury, most of the mob crowd stayed out in the corridors, while Negroes and the better class of whites sat inside.

I visited Marion just a few months before the lynching. At that time the colored people gave a banquet for me, to which the mayor, the chief of police, and other city officials and prominent citizens came by invitation. They ate and drank with us. They declared that the colored people were on the whole the most law-abiding and the best citizens of Marion. But seven months after the savage lynching, many white people frowned or growled at the sight of a colored person; friendly greetings were rare, suspicion quick. We always fear and suspect those whom we have injured.

At the trial, while the judge seemed to be professional, the general atmosphere of the court was biased. The two young lawyers representing the attorney general's office and the "State" were looked upon as enemies of the community not only by the mob but also by most of the court officials. Their objections were almost uniformly denied and they were frequently insulted by court subordinates, while the two defense lawyers by a trick kept one of the prosecutors, Judge Earl Stroup, from making his plea to the court. After Merl Wald, the first prosecutor, had made his argument before the court, the attorneys for the defense announced that they would make no argument; as a result Stroup had no chance to present the devastating rebuttal which they knew he would make. The defense lawyers, who appeared to be weak and inexperienced—they were said to be two insurance agents who had recently "read law"—were willing to let their case rest with the evident prejudices of the jury. One of the defense attorneys was observed exchanging grins and disparaging grimaces with one of the jurors while Prosecutor Wald was making his remarkably fine statement to the jury. In his charge the judge laid great emphasis on the "presumption of innocence" to which the defendant was entitled, and stressed the point that proofs against him must be "beyond a reasonable doubt."

The case went to the jury on Friday. All afternoon the crowd waited, hundreds of people with less than twenty determined Negroes among them. The jury evidently could not agree. The Negroes had decided to stay through to the end. Mobs are like dogs. They seize you when you run, but only bark or growl or snap at you when you stand. The Negroes decided to stand at all costs. There were detectives, uniformed policemen, and deputy sheriffs in the crowd, but their presence held no assurance for colored people. Many of the spectators were armed, including some of the Negroes. Six of the Negroes who stayed were women, including Mrs. F. K. Bailey, local leader of the colored people. She and her husband, like all the other colored

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citizens of Marion, have been living under the threat of mob attacks ever since last August. The jury deliberated for many hours. Apparently it included at least one brave man who held out to the end, for the final report was disagreement. The trials of these two lynchers will have cost the county eight or ten thousand dollars. That is perhaps the only punishment that will be meted out. Other cases will be dropped.

The Lennon trial was a fitting climax to the events of the preceding months in Marion. The mob had "felt its oats" ever since that savage night in August and had made continuous attempts to terrorize the Negroes. They rode up and down through the Negro sections in fast autos, shooting and shouting, sometimes adjusting their engines so as to make rapid "back-firing" in the wee hours of the morning, simulating machine-guns. The one Negro physician, who has his office just a half-block from the main square and the courthouse and who has quietly but determinedly kept up his practice in the face of repeated threats, seems to be the chief thorn in the flesh of these people. The physician, six feet tall, straightforward, unquivering, says nothing but goes armed constantly, carrying a Winchester in addition when he answers calls at night. One night, after the firing of many shots near his residence, four automobiles filled with men drew up and parked directly in front of his house on the opposite side of the street. The doctor opened his front door so that the flare of his brightly lighted house fell right across the porch and down the front walk. The mob decided not to accept his invitation and silently withdrew.

Threats were passed around about what would happen to the colored population if Lennon were convicted. It seemed to make no difference that there was no Negro concerned in the actual trial in any way, not even as a witness: the prosecuting lawyers were representing the attorney general's office and the "State" and were almost apologetic in explaining that they had only a professional interest. The case throughout was one of white against white, eight of the most reputable citizens of the town being witnesses against the lyncher. Yet on the day preceding the giving of the case to the jury, mysterious telephone calls were made to the residence where the representative of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was staying, "warning" him or insinuating threats. The warning came from a white woman, who said that she could not afford to give her name or to tell from what telephone she was making the call. The voices of men called several times, inquiring where the association's speaker was to speak next in Marion, and what route he would take in going and coming that day to and from Muncie. And all night there was shooting and automobile back-firing through the streets where colored people live. The next day efforts were made to frighten all colored people from attending court. Some were frightened away. Others went back with grim determination and a desperate resignation.

The Indiana legislature has just passed a bill to curb lynching. The bill originated among the colored people as a result of the Marion lynchings, and was finally passed almost intact. It provides for (1) automatic suspension of the sheriff in whose county a lynching takes place, with reinstatement only when it is proved to the satisfaction of the governor that the sheriff did his full duty in trying to prevent the lynching; (2) money damages to be assessed against the town, city, or county in favor of the relatives and heirs of the lynched person. The colored people also want the constitution amended, if necessary, to permit the State to ask a change of venue in the trial of lynchers. At present only the accused may ask such a change. In cases of mob violence it would be safe and good policy to allow the prosecution to move for change of venue, for when a great mob holds a small community in its grip for twenty-four hours, there is hardly a prospective juror in the place who is not either a member of the mob, a relative of a member, a friend or a debtor or creditor of a member, or in some way a colleague or henchman of someone interested in defending a member of the mob.

To see Marion nearly seven months after a lynching was to realize the disastrous effect of mob action upon a presumably civilized community. It is a question whether the present generation of Marion inhabitants can ever recover from the relapse of that one night, when they dragged two Negro boys from the jail to a tree on the courthouse lawn in the center square of the city; when, after the killing was over, their youths and young men seized the rope, and like savages, all with their hands on the sacred piece of hemp, danced from the jail to the courthouse lawn, like college students making merry after an athletic victory.

In the Driftway

HIGHER education as it is practiced in this country has come in for some hard knocks within the winter just past. And if the Drifter feels constrained to say a word in its favor it is not because he would care to deny any of the strictures that have been passed upon it by critics more qualified than himself. Aside from the fact that he learned long ago—from a college prof—that it is useless to argue with anyone who doesn't already agree with you, the Drifter would be the first to admit to a serious-minded investigator that in his own case the years he spent at college were mostly wasted, that the hard-earned money (hard-earned by someone else) he consumed might better have gone back into the business, that gerunds and gerundives are to him almost as if they had never been. But he would still feel that the investigator was wasting his breath in railing at American universities.

* * * * *

IT is not yet a crime even in a democracy to say that there are fewer excellent brains in any given group, State, or nation than there are mediocre brains. Keeping that fact in mind, surely it is a little less than realistic to assume that universities which are open to all who come—and the Drifter thinks they should be—can possibly have much relation to higher education in its strict sense; further, if we must provide enough teachers to call the rolls, and if those teachers must have Ph.D.'s to get their jobs, it is patently absurd to expect that very many Ph.D. theses will have any relation to "real scholarship," whatever that is. Such assumptions and expectations can lead only to false hopes and savage sneers, both of which are irrelevant. The Drifter feels, in short, that Abraham Flexner's Institute for Advanced Learning, to

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which only scholars will be admitted for work in "pure science and high scholarship," is much more to the point than Abraham Flexner's book on the universities. The present-day college will probably remain just about as it is. The critics and the scholars would do better in the Drifter's opinion to let that windmill whirl in its own democratic air and head for more rarefied and more exclusive regions.

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AS a matter of fact, the Drifter, acknowledging a heresy, thinks that youngsters learn a great deal in college. And if what they learn enters their consciousness during an all-night session in a dormitory bedroom instead of in the class hour father pays for, at least it is likely to be remembered longer and used oftener. The Drifter, for instance, learned a great deal about two subjects not listed in the catalogue on a spring afternoon when he went for a walk with a girl instead of attending a duly scheduled physiology lab. During the stroll an impassioned discussion of careers for women broke loose; in the midst of which there was discovered a hoptoad that had got marooned in a black lake of tar which the spring sun had treacherously melted. For hours the Drifter labored heroically with a jackknife, digging out first one leg and then another, only to find that some other toe had inadvertently slipped back. The battle grew fiercer, and the talk about women grew more impassioned, as the afternoon waned and the tar hardened. But Eliza Hoptoad was finally extricated, presumably intact, since the Drifter cannot remember that she limped as she hopped away; and the woman question was clarified if not settled. The moral of this tale is that the Drifter that day learned so much about the texture of a toad's hide, the stretch of a toad's legs, and the quality of a toad's patience that he has ever since felt a knowing intimacy with hoptoads. Likewise, he learned so much about women that he has been a staunch feminist ever since. These attitudes of his toward hoptoads and women may not partake of education. He thinks they do. But he would never presume to call it higher education.

* * * * *

THE Drifter thinks the American university should continue to be open to all who come. Every human being should have at least one opportunity to lead the remote and academic existence which the campus provides. College days are like the false spring of February that comes and goes before the mind can take it in. The only trouble with the students the Drifter knew, including himself, was that they were so preoccupied with April's plowing that February's sunshine was only half-experienced. Naturally they could not know that all their striving would most likely bring them up against nothing more rewarding than overproduction and a sharp decline in prices. It is not true that college students are frivolous-minded. They are in fact the most serious-minded creatures alive. If they concern themselves with first love and the latest rules of an autocratic dean, who is to say that these are less worthy than the price of stocks, the precise date of an early Egyptian tax list, or the founding of a political party? To appease the serious-minded investigators, remove the label Higher Education from the college gate. Put up instead a line from the early Masefield: "The days that make us happy make us wise."

THE DRIFTER

Correspondence

Handle Words with Care

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: To say, as you do in *The Nation* of March 18, that Hoover's philosophy would do credit to "a Proudhon the anarchist" is much too great a compliment for our President.

> Several of our fellow-men have agreed to treat each other with good faith and fair play—that is, to respect those rules of action which the nature of things points out to them as being alone capable of assuring to them, in the fullest measure, prosperity, safety, and peace. Are you willing to join their league, to form a part of their society? Do you promise to respect the honor, the liberty, the goods of your brothers? Do you promise never to appropriate to yourself, neither by violence, by fraud, by usury, nor by speculation, another's product or possession? Do you promise never to lie and deceive, neither in court, in trade, nor in any of your dealings? You are free to accept or to refuse.

The above is from Proudhon. What relation has it to what the President stands for?

Government never stands for individualism. It stands for the exploitation of the many by the few with the help of the a my and the church. You may say that it should stand for social service, but it never has. On the power question Hoover's position merely means that government shall protect a few individuals in the privilege of exploiting nature's bounty and the workers for the benefit of that few. No individual wishes to live without society, and the intelligent individual knows that if he is not to be exploited it must be a condition of society that there shall be no exploitation of human beings.

It is not fair to use words loosely simply to bolster up an argument. Socialism, anarchism, individualism, wealth, capital, education are all used loosely and ambiguously by most people. Those who would teach should be more painstaking.

Newfoundland, N. J., March 23 ALEXIS C. FERM

Support Civil Liberties

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: May I draw the attention of *Nation* readers to the nation-wide membership campaign of the American Civil Liberties Union? Although it is hardly necessary to introduce the union to *Nation* readers, it might be well to remind them of the very important role the union plays in American life today. *Briefly, the work of the union consists in keeping a vigilant* eye open for cases of violation of free speech, press, and assemblage, and in supplying the victims of such attack, regardless of race, class, creeds, or principles advocated, with expert legal aid, widespread publicity, and organized protest.

The demands on the union this year, through the unrest caused by unemployment, and the intolerant temper of the police, have increased tremendously, and there is no sign of abatement. Our work at the present time is being maintained by an exceedingly small though active membership. It is vitally necessary that we double our strength.

Yearly membership ranges from $1 up through $2, $5, $10, $25, and $100. Our *Quarterly Review* goes to all members, bulletins and pamphlets to members paying $2 and over, and our weekly news release to members paying $10 and over. Further information can be had by addressing the American Civil Liberties Union, 100 Fifth Avenue, New York.

New York, April 1 HELEN WINNER, Secretary

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Intellectuals and the Bonus

To the Editor of The Nation:

Sir: I can easily understand why veterans of the World War want a bonus. And it is also obvious why rich taxpayers like Secretary Mellon are against such appropriations. But I have never understood why the liberal press has been consistently hostile to bonus bills.

You must admit that one function of the government is to distribute its money unevenly by grants, subsidies, and bonuses. Possibly you may be against tariffs, ship subsidies, and guaranties to railroads and infant industries. But you certainly advocate special aid to mothers, to the aged, to the unemployed, to backward farmers, and to many other groups. You favor a graduated income tax, which is class legislation.

Even if a true liberal be against the foregoing grants, he undoubtedly favors the postal system. Yet the postal system, even-handed as it seems, grants special favors to farmers in the parcel service, to airplane companies and shipping interests, to magazines and papers through cheap rates, to business through low third-class rates, to the party in power by manipulation of postmasterships and post offices, and to its current legislators in franking privileges that are generally used to further personal political ends. What is true of the postal service is true of other government functions. Subsidies are not more just because they are not open. The only possible way for the government to avoid special grants would be to dole its income out in cash to individual citizens—and not even the Socialists want that.

Since the government cannot avoid subsidies, the only question for the intellectuals is: Is the subsidy good or bad? The pro-bonus soldiers make two claims: (1) that a dollar a day, plus board, lodging, and pills, was an insufficient wage for the job of killing; and (2) that private soldiers belong to the comparatively poor class that should be helped at the expense of the rich.

There is no such thing as a just wage for knocking home runs or crooning blues or killing Germans. But surely the intellectuals would not commit murder or aid in it for three dollars a day. Even our gunmen and our hangmen demand more. Nor can the intellectuals deny that wealthy privates were practically non-existent, and that rich men either secured exemption or became officers in safe or dangerous places. If our unweary liberals believe in correcting past errors in the Philippines and Panama, let them also advocate "adjusted compensation" nearer home. If the liberals believe that our gap between rich and poor is too vast, let them begin with this piecemeal correction.

Such is the case for subsidies and for this particular subsidy. There are, however, a number of minor facts which liberal magazines have consistently misrepresented. (1) The war-risk insurance cannot be a substitute for pensions because it was at first, and still is largely, a death benefit. (2) The Civil War pensions are our nearest general approach to those old-age pensions that the liberal press so much desires—the awards go to old soldiers and old widows, usually of the poor or middle class. (3) The cost of pensions is a pacifist argument, useful for the liberal press. (4) The war-risk insurance is not a gift from a grateful government—it is just as strictly business as a postage stamp. Rates are cheaper than those of private companies, but the government pays for no advertising, employs no solicitors, pays no commissions, pays no taxes, has comparatively few statistics, and pays small premiums. (5) Similarly, the present Bachrach bill is a business proposition. Not one cent of charity is involved. The government which has been lending money to its heroes at 5½ per cent on good security is now willing to lend twice as much on good security at 4½ per cent. Why does the liberal press always fail to mention that the government has been borrowing this money at 3½ per cent? Why does it never say that the government's profit in borrowing over $300,000,000 at 3½ per cent and lending it at 5½ per cent has amounted to $6,000,000 a year, less operating expenses? What sort of "Treasury grab" is that, and who does the grabbing?

State College, Pa., March 1 W. L. Werner

Not Pirandello

To the Editor of The Nation:

Sir: After reading, in your issue of February 18, Mark Van Doren's review of the current performance of Pirandello's play "As You Desire Me," I had a bewildered feeling that he must be speaking of some other play than "Come Tu Mi Vuoi," which I had just finished reading in Italian. Then I went to the Maxine Elliott Theater to see the production. I found that Mr. Van Doren's remarks are quite justified as far as that play is concerned. But that play can scarcely be called Pirandello's. The production itself is poor enough—it is only the acting of Judith Anderson which in any way redeems it—but we can ignore that since all of Mr. Van Doren's irritation seems to be directed at Pirandello.

In very small letters in the program you may read "adapted from the Italian." It would have been much nearer to the truth to have said "a new play, with the names of the characters and the barest outline of the story borrowed from Pirandello, and entirely rewritten down to what the Broadway producer considers the intellectual level of the American audience." The play as given here bears about the same resemblance to the play Pirandello wrote as the average movie scenario does to the novel from which it is adapted. Lines, scenes, incidents, spirit—all have been changed; what in the Italian is a delicately evocative, wistful study in half-tones, all done by allusion and indirection, becomes here a heavy-handed and rather absurd melodrama. It is scarcely a tribute to the intelligence and taste of the theatergoer to have the producer feel, as he so obviously must have felt here, that unless the play were flattened out with an elephantine tread, and every bit of subtlety or metaphysics signposted for the level of twelve-year-olds, it could not succeed before an American audience. Some day I hope that we may have the privilege of seeing the play that Pirandello wrote. Until then I suggest that the critics reserve judgment on Pirandello as a dramatist.

Dobbs Ferry, N. Y., March 1 Louise N. Trueblood

Mordecai Manuel Noah

To the Editor of The Nation:

Sir: I am completing a full biography of the American Jew, Mordecai Manuel Noah (1785-1851), who was prominent in the political, dramatic, diplomatic, journalistic, and social life of his time.

Since I am very eager to establish communication with any descendants of his who may be in possession of documents or of authentic information relating to him, I should be glad to hear from such persons, who may address me in care of the John Day Company, 386 Fourth Avenue, New York City. All documents will be scrupulously cared for and returned by registered mail immediately after perusal.

New York, March 23 Isaac Goldberg

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Proportional Representation in Ireland

Will It Survive?

WE print here an interesting account of the workings of proportional representation in the Irish Free State, where the system has been in effect during three general elections. The account was written by the Irish correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian Weekly*.

The Free State has proportional representation in its most elaborate and exact form. The census of 1926 suggested the desirability of a bill for the redistribution of seats, and this has naturally led politicians to consider the suitability of the electoral system which has been tried out now in three general elections.

The a priori arguments usually urged against proportional representation are that it fosters the group system in the legislature and thereby produces instability in the executive, or, alternatively, makes the cabinet unduly subservient to the caprice of the legislature. A posteriori we note that things have turned out otherwise. The Free State is today apparently nearer the two-party system than any country in Europe. Its cabinet is the longest-lived of European cabinets, and his worst enemy will not accuse Mr. Cosgrave of having truckled to the legislature.

It may be argued that these results are due to abnormal conditions—to the fact that one of the Free State parties, Fianna Fail, was an extra-constitutional party which aimed at subverting the foundations of the state. Thus the government party, which is essentially a coalition of separate groups, was compelled to cohere as closely as if it were a true unitary party, while the ministers' revolutionary training gave them an unusual contempt for the elected representatives of the constituencies. Now that Fianna Fail no longer cares to talk of denouncing the treaty, Mr. Cosgrave begins to find it less easy to hold his party together and has to be more cautious about pushing through unpopular reforms.

Even if this is admitted, the fact remains that proportional representation makes for stability in another way. It has abolished sensationalism in politics. The existing English system magnifies the effect of a 10 per cent swing-over of votes, so that a large parliamentary majority may be converted into a humiliated minority, while a minority in the country may get an effective parliamentary majority. Under proportional representation 10 per cent of changes among the voters will be represented by 10 per cent changes in the party numbers in the Dail, and a party which has 40 per cent of the voters in the country gets 40 per cent, and no more, of the seats in the Dail. Further, since proportional representation necessitates large constituencies with four or five seats, each large party is sure of returning its leading candidate in each constituency. Thus on election day there is no hope in any constituency of utterly defeating the enemy's champion. The battle centers round the fate of the second-class candidates.

Another fact about proportional representation which Free State experience brings out is that it favors the candidate with a cross-bench mind as against the sound party man. Suppose a constituency with four seats. The voter is presented with a ballot paper containing ten names. Four are his own party candidates, four belong to the opposition party, one belongs to a small party, and the last is an independent. The voter is quite ready to put two of his own party candidates first and second. Then, with a great effort, he recalls the adjurations of his party leaders and the local canvasser and puts three against his third party man, whom he thinks a bit of an ass. But now he feels that he has done his duty nobly by his party and that he is free to consider his private preferences and exercise his individual judgment with his remaining votes. "Mr. A, number 4 on my party's list, I have always regarded as an unreasonable fellow, anything but an ornament to the party. Now, Mr. B, number 4 on the opposition list, is a decent and intelligent man, likely to exercise a restraining influence on his colleagues. Why shouldn't I give him my fourth preference? And then the independent has done local services and understands our local needs better than any man. Let him have my number 5. And then there is the new party. It deserves encouragement. We need a new point of view. I'll put their man number 6." One of these last votes is quite likely to become effective—number 4 or number 5 more likely than number 6. Thus the wise party manager is careful to choose moderate men as candidates. It is in this way, rather than by getting direct representation for minority interests, that proportional representation has proved a valuable protection to minorities. In spite of the evil legacies left by the bad times the Dail has shown itself on most subjects, except ancient history, reasonable, free from prejudice, and not given to violent utterances.

What pleases the elector is poison to the professional politician, who dislikes the cross-bench mind and wants the sound party man and the emotional atmosphere at elections which brings the sound party man into the House. Thus he is anxious to abolish proportional representation for very much the same reasons as influenced his Ulster brothers to do the deed in Northern Ireland. The strongest argument which he has against it is that it necessitates large constituencies. A five-seat constituency is the smallest suitable unit. It is true that in such constituencies there is a lack of touch between the sitting members and their constituents which is unsatisfactory to both.

Large constituencies also make electioneering expensive for a small party like the Irish Labor Party, which may not wish to contest more than one-quarter of the seats. Its difficulties are aggravated by the fact that Free State electoral law places no restriction on the supply of transport for the convenience of voters. Only the two big parties can afford to have cars in every corner of the country areas.

A return to the single-seat, single-vote constituency system would annihilate the Labor Party and many independents. Hence Mr. Cosgrave could not and probably would not wish to carry such a measure. But the professional politicians may induce him to copy the new English bill and try single-member constituencies with the transferable vote. The effect of this in the Free State would apparently be to promote party spirit. It does not even seem likely to strengthen the position of the third party, Labor. Nor can one easily see why it should be expected to conduce to better government than the Free State has hitherto enjoyed.

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Spring Book Section

The Philosophy of Morris R. Cohen

By HENRY HAZLITT

THE appearance of "Reason and Nature,"* by Morris R. Cohen, seems to me destined to mark an important milestone, perhaps even a turning-point, in the history of American philosophic thought. Even a critic unsympathetic to its temper and typical conclusions can hardly refuse it a place on that modest shelf of American philosophic classics which holds the works of a bare handful of thinkers—Peirce, James, Santayana, Dewey. What makes it peculiarly significant at this time is that it marks a definite repudiation of the doctrines and catchwords which, chiefly under the influence of James and Dewey, have dominated American speculative thought at least since the beginning of the present century.

One may begin by admitting, indeed, that Morris Cohen's philosophy is "un-American," just as the philosophy of James and Dewey, as most European critics were quick to recognize, is peculiarly American. In James's pragmatism, for example, as Santayana pointed out nearly twenty years ago (and his comment is just as true of Dewey's more recent instrumentalism), there are echoes of various popular American moral forces, like democracy, impressionism, love of the concrete, respect for success, trust in will and action, and the habit of relying on the future, rather than on the past, to justify one's methods and opinions. Writers more distinguished for their patriotism than their perspicacity have even hailed this philosophic reflection of our national ideals as one of the outstanding merits, if not *the* outstanding merit, of the philosophers concerned. It is significant, however, that these writers have never carried their patriotism to the length of demanding a peculiarly American science, nor does one find them praising, say, a German thinker because his thought is peculiarly German. Philosophy, like science, is worth little unless it is as true in Ceylon as in Cincinnati. Thought that is characteristically national is apt to be merely provincial. It is even open to the suspicion of being a disguised rationalization of the local *mores,* a system of apologetics.

Now one of the distinguishing traits of Professor Cohen's thought is that it is not only remarkably free from provincialism of place but from provincialism of time. It is neither "American" nor "modern." It is, on the contrary, deeply traditional; not in the sense that it lacks freshness or force, but in the sense that it has attempted to digest the thought of the great philosophers of the past; it feels that the road to truth lies through them rather than around them; that even their errors are instructive, and that instead of airily bidding them goodby, we might profitably examine what they had to say. "The notion that we can dismiss the views of all previous thinkers," he writes, "surely leaves no basis for the hope that our own work will prove of any value to others." "The philosopher whose primary interest is to attain as much truth as possible," he continues, "must put aside as a snare the effort at originality. Indeed, it seems to me that the modern penchant for novelty in philosophy is symptomatic of restlessness or low intellectual vitality." Philosophy, in short, must grow like science, not by each thinker rejecting everything that his predecessors have believed, but rather by absorbing it, scrutinizing it critically, amending, correcting, supplementing, developing it at this point and that, seeking always for more comprehensive vision, but never forgetting that omnipotence and omniscience are not to be attained. "The task of philosophy is too complicated to be solved by simple magical formulae. The age of panaceas, nostrums, and philosopher's stones belongs to the adolescence of philosophy."

I have said that Professor Cohen's thought is neither "American" nor "modern." This is most sharply revealed in his Epilogue: In Dispraise of Life, Experience, and Reality. Popular modern philosophy is honeycombed with these three terms, yet it is impossible to attach a clear meaning to any of them. The last two have been stretched to the point where they no longer have intelligible negatives; the first has often been absurdly narrowed. Thus Nietzsche sharply opposes the pursuit of life to the pursuit of knowledge, ignoring the quite obvious fact that the pursuit of knowledge is itself a form of life. "To the eye of philosophic reflection," Cohen replies, "the scholar or persistent thinker shows as much life or vitality as those who have to cover their naked restlessness by a gospel of strenuous but aimless perpetual motion—in no particular direction. The term "experience" again, as popularized by Professor Dewey, is equally applicable to everything that is an object of consideration, and Professor Cohen cannot see that it serves any definite intellectual function beyond carrying the faint aroma of praise. In brief, the philosophic scandal surrounding all three terms —life, experience, reality—arises from the fact that they have established themselves as terms of praise rather than of description; and the honorific use of non-discriminating terms can only serve to darken counsel.

These criticisms in themselves give the clue to Professor Cohen's broader position. He is a rationalist, in the sense that he is convinced that philosophers, whatever their opinions, must rely on the validity of logical reasoning to establish them; and the task to which he addresses himself in his first chapter is that of defending reason against the modern attacks upon it. For in spite of the popular worship of "science," we have been witnessing today a remarkably widespread decline of the prestige of intellect and reason. This distrust of reason, Professor Cohen feels, has its roots deep in the dominant temper of our age, an age whose feverish restlessness makes it impatiently out of tune with the slow rhythm of deliberate order. Recent popular philosophies—those of James, Bergson, Croce, Nietzsche, Spengler, for example—are at one with recent fiction, poetry, music, painting, and sculpture in attaching greater value to novel impressions and vehement expression than to coherency and order. The romantic or "Dionysiac" contempt for prudence and deliberative (so-called bourgeois) morality is a crude expression of the same reaction against scientific or rigorous intellectual procedure. Professor Cohen does not think it far-fetched

* Harcourt, Brace and Company. $5.

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to correlate this distrust of intellectual procedure with a growing bigotry and intolerance in political life, and the remarkable resurgence of faith in violence. "From Moscow to the Mediterranean there reigns a pathetic faith in salvation through brutality."

He turns his attention, therefore, to the various arguments—those of psychologism, historicism, empiricism, kineticism—that have been used by those who distrust reason. These anti-rationalistic arguments, which Professor Cohen examines and rejects in turn, are at bottom romantic. Romanticism, however, is not merely negative, but involves an abounding faith in some inner, creative, and unlimited source of illumination or revelation superior to ordinary reason. Professor Cohen considers separately these various rivals and alleged substitutes for reason: authority (as variously reflected in the church, tradition, and expert opinion), "pure experience," intuition, instinct, and creative imagination, and he shows that these are either unreliable or complements of rather than substitutes for reason. Faith, he holds in the end, cannot be based on skepticism as to reason. As for William James's "Will to Believe": "Reason in the form of logical science is an effort to determine the weight of evidence. To tip the scales by the will to believe is childish foolishness, since the real weight of things is not thereby changed."

I have said that Professor Cohen is a rationalist, but I do not mean to imply that he returns to the naive rationalism of the eighteenth century. For while he emphasizes the role of reason, he does not identify knowledge with its rational element. Nature is more than reason; no possible number of analyses can exhaust it; always there remains the beyond, the unexplained, the contingent. Logical "explanations" can never do more than push back the contingency of our fundamental assumptions: ultimately the universe is just what it is. Yet though "our reason may be a pitiful candle light in the dark and boundless seas of being, we have nothing better, and woe to those who wilfully try to put it out."

Professor Cohen is then ready to devote himself to some of the broader philosophic problems raised by reason and scientific method—induction and deduction, the theory of probability, the irrational, and the a priori. He is a realist, in the older metaphysical sense opposed to nominalist; that is, he believes that classes, universals, and relations are real, or at least correspond to something real in nature, and are not mere convenient mental fictions as supposed by empirical sensationalists like Mill. One other principle is central to his thought—the principle of polarity. This is suggested by the phenomena of magnetism, where north and south pole are always distinct, opposed, yet inseparable. Thus opposites such as immediacy and mediation, unity and plurality, the fixed and the flux, substance and function, ideal and real, actual and possible, all involve each other when applied to any significant entity. Not only, for example, must every natural event have a cause which determines that it should happen, but the cause must be opposed by some factor which prevents it from producing any greater effect than it actually does. This principle (which suggests the Hegelian dialectic, with the significant difference that it never violates the principle of contradiction by holding opposites to be *identical*) may seem at first merely obvious or verbal, but the persistency and rigorousness with which Professor Cohen applies it over a wide range of problems makes it yield highly important insights. Professor Cohen deals in turn, in a series of brilliant chapters—which would be amazing for their scholarship alone—with the problems of method and the crucial philosophic issues raised by mathematics, physics, biology, psychology, and the various social sciences, particularly political theory, law, and ethics. Space does not permit me to indicate in detail the conclusions to which he comes in each subject, but something must be said of his method of approach. He is too critical a mind to line up with any party or cult. Thus, in ethics, he can accept neither absolutism nor antinomianism; in psychology, he is as severe on the loose metaphors and hypostatizations of the psychoanalysts as on the crude materialistic monism of the behaviorists; and in biology, though in the end he finds the hypothesis of mechanism far preferable to that of vitalism, he is careful to point out that neither is free from undue dogmatism. A student of physics and mathematics, he accepts the necessary implications of relativity and recent discoveries regarding the atom without being at all impressed by the religious and philosophic lessons drawn by men like Millikan, Eddington, Jeans, and Compton. While he respects the great achievements of these men in their special fields, he feels that they cease to be scientific when they jump off into "amateurish speculative flights" in the fields of religion and philosophy. In short, he is never a mere "eclectic" or a facile "reconciler"; he is as far as possible from the mushy the-truth-probably-lies-somewhere-between-the-two-extremes writer. Like Bradley, he knows that the exact opposite of a false idea may be an idea equally false.

Emphasizing, as he does, the need for the richest possible variety of observations and hypotheses to assure the probable truth of our results, insisting on the need of unifying principles and yet always directing our attention to the complexity and the fulness of the concrete facts in any particular problem, Professor Cohen bears little resemblance, either, to the philosophic system-builder. What he gives us, in the end, is not a "system" but a set of marvelously sharp philosophic tools. What interests him is the methods rather than the results of thinking; or rather, he feels that more attention to the first will assure more success in the second. If we were to study propositions about morals, for example, with the same detachment as propositions about electrons, caring more for the rules of the scientific game than for any particular result, our ethical theories would probably be much sounder than they are.

Professor Cohen's style compares unfavorably in some respects with Santayana's dulcet periods or with Bertrand Russell's ease and lucidity, but it is not lacking in a fine terseness of its own. Compared with Dewey's prose it seems a model of clarity and firmness. A high devotion to truth keeps the general tone serious. Professor Cohen resists the temptation, to which brilliant writers like Eddington and Poincaré often succumb, to strain after paradoxes; but he often permits himself a dry irony, and he has a remarkable gift for pithy aphorism.

In output, he has revealed a scrupulous will-to-refrain remarkable in our time. For many years his reputation has been growing, but up to now that reputation has been rather esoteric. "Reason and Nature," his first book, appears when he has reached the age of fifty. This explains, in part, why it achieves such remarkable compression; it represents almost literally the work of a lifetime.

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The New Mythology

By HORACE GREGORY

THE last eight years in American poetry have been commonly regarded as a comparatively sterile period. The enthusiasm of the 1912 renaissance, with its many discoveries and its new bohemianism, had reached a climax in 1922, and was beginning to recede. The publication of "The Waste Land" in the pages of the *Dial* was the first indication of a change that was to steer American poetry into new channels, and to develop what may be called a new mythology.

T. S. Eliot, by a deliberate analysis of the civilization recognized as characteristically American, found a title for his major poem. The fact that the immediate locale of the poem was contemporary London is of secondary importance. It is significant that the poem deals with the problems of the contemporary scene and the frustration of spiritual life in the modern city. The "hollow men" (of the poem that appeared shortly after the publication of "The Waste Land") are creatures produced from a waste-land environment. They form a chorus serving as a background for the progress of a modern tragedy.

> We are the hollow men
> We are the stuffed men . . .
>
> Remember us—if at all—not as lost
> Violent souls, but only
> As the hollow men . . .
>
> This is the dead land
> This is cactus land . . .

Grishkin in a drawing-room, J. Alfred Prufrock, and Apeneck Sweeney are of the same race, children of a broad American desert. The validity of Eliot's myths may be subjected to something that resembles scientific proof. In "Middletown" we rediscover the same barren continent, populated with a "business class" that bears a generic relationship to the hollow men. The despair of the waste land is reechoed throughout Mr. Lynd's sociological report of the average post-war American. Spiritually bankrupt, friendless, obscure, standardized, Mr. Middletown accepts the routine of business as a religious ritual. Both Middletown and his wife seek relief in childish or vicarious excitement. Automobiles, radios, the talkies, speakeasies, and country clubs offer an escape, or at least enough excitement to counterbalance the nervous strain of making a career in business and the fear of losing the job.

It is no wonder that the post-war poet reacted sharply from the Whitmanesque optimism and the blind search for beauty that ran their course in the renaissance of 1912 to 1922. He was confronted with the problem of finding a substitute for old symbols of a spiritual life or recreating traditional symbols of metaphysics into a new language and a new mythology. Upon the evidence of the poetry that has been written within the last eight years, it seems inevitable that much of the new mythology carries with it the implication of tragedy.

Far removed from T. S. Eliot, and springing from tradition that is predominently romantic, Robinson Jeffers has created an entire world of demi-gods walking toward us out of the sharp sunlight and violent storms of Southern California. The psychological importance of Robinson Jeffers's creations is a debatable point, but it may be dismissed as irrelevant to the present interpretation. Mr. Yvor Winters, in a review published in *Poetry* of February, 1930, has attacked Mr. Jeffers's philosophic credos and his ability to control a precise and effective poetic vocabulary. This, too, is beside the point that Jeffers has given us a convincing mythology which survives by virtue of his narrative power. Cawdor and his adulterous wife, Roan Stallion and the woman, California, the Greek giants in "The Tower Beyond" tragedy, and even the mad preacher in "The Women at Pont Sur" may be taken as symbols rising from the America of "Shine, Perishing Republic."

> While this America settles in the mold of its vulgarity,
> heavily thickening to empire . . .
> . . . be in nothing so moderate as in love of man, a
> clever servant, insufferable master.
> There is a trap that catches noblest spirits, that
> caught—they say—God, when he walked on earth.

The waste land of "Cawdor" and "Tamar" takes on the character of a quicksand. It is not only desolate but treacherous. The magnificent land- and seascape of the Pacific coast, the quick, earth-shaking storms and the grateful calm of rich sunlight over redwood forests and long, rolling beaches, merely deceive the eyes of Titans who are lost in a monstrous hell of their own making. Cawdor, perhaps the most significant of Jeffers's heroes, knows that the materialism of American life has set another trap for him:

> Ruling men's money's a wedge in the world. But
> after I'd split it open a crack I looked in and saw
> The trick inside it, the filthy nothing, the fooled and
> rotten faces of rich and successful men.

Yet Cawdor cannot escape his own doom. The betrayal of human love, a central theme, running throughout Jeffers's poetry, from his early volume "Californians" down to his "Loving Shepherdess," is Cawdor's undoing. Humanity, if we are to accept it at Jeffers's evaluation, feeds upon itself, grows inward, and rots. It is only in the sacrifice of human attributes and in death that Jeffers's myths find union with his deity. Translated into strong lines of action (the very plot a symbol of human destruction) the creatures of Jeffers's imagination stride, love, and die within a nightmare that is becoming known as the American consciousness, which is a poetic distortion of the American scene. They are manifestations of a civilization that on the surface seems childishly innocent and harmlessly insane.

Following upon the heels of Jeffers's Titans, we have Hart Crane's synthesis of America in "The Bridge." It is a deliberate conception of a new myth, and like Jeffers (as opposed to Eliot) Crane relies upon the vitality of an anti-intellectual force. His work translates the emotional shock of skyscraper environment into a fresh poetic vocabulary. Again we see the contemporary poet searching for spiritual

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values in the American desert. Crane looks backward into America's past toward Pocahontas, Cutty Sark, the Great River, and gazes forward where Atlantis lies, but the present is a world of the Tunnel, where the subway roars through hell:

> The phonographs of hades in the brain
> Are tunnels that rewind themselves, and love
> A burnt match skating in a urinal . . .

Crane attempts a solution, never quite articulate, of his relationship to modern life by way of metaphysics. He has taken the broad background of the American tradition and woven its symbols into a strong yet delicate pattern. Poe, Melville, Whitman, and William Carlos Williams of "The American Grain" are recreated in his own idiom. The forward leap of the poem at its close leaves the barren soil of the waste land far behind:

> intrinsic Myth
> Whose fell unshadow is death's utter wound . . .
> Forever Deity's glittering pledge, O Thou . . .

If Eliot, Jeffers, and Crane were the only creators of a waste-land mythology, they could be readily presented as three striking literary accidents, but such is not the case. The reaction to the American waste land, even when it has resulted in an attempt to escape into the language and music of seventeenth-century poetic diction, is characteristic of the poetry that is being written today. A composite portrait of the scene reveals rather than obscures the characteristic attitude.

Since the war there has been a development of an expatriate group of which Eliot himself is a member, and whose influence is felt in the work of Archibald MacLeish and R. Ellsworth Larsson. The sterility of the modern scene is stressed and made poignant by a nostalgia for the past and the use of distinguished music. MacKnight Black has made the machine itself a means of producing decorative effects, but his commentary upon the entire civilization is slight. Closely allied to the expatriate mood is one of post-war cynicism such as we find in the poetry of Kenneth Fearing. Here is the world of the tabloids, stripped clean of emotional values and presented in the staccato of machine-gun bullets. The same gin-drinking, insane New York civilization comes to light in Joseph Moncure March's "Wild Party," and the specific horror of the waste land is very close to us indeed.

Returning to the mythology of Robinson Jeffers and away from the immediate effects of urban civilization, Isidor Schneider's "Temptation of Anthony" recreates the typical American tragedy in a small-town environment. Frustrated emotional life blazes forth in fury against a persecuted protagonist. The individual man, artist and lover, is crushed and then deified by the mob.

A recent development of the contemporary attitude in American poetry is one of withdrawal from actual conflict. For the moment there is a revival of interest in traditional poetic language and formal elegance, combined with the effort to express emotion in terms of metaphysics. This is another way of saying that the younger groups of American poets are looking for spiritual sustenance and exact boundaries in which they can find security. Perhaps the most original and gifted of these is Léonie Adams, whose precise use of the traditional patterns in metaphysical poetry is always sharp and convincing. Stanley Kunitz and Yvor Winters are also significant figures in building a defense against the intrusion of a harsh world. Their work must not be confused with the familiar art-for-art's-sake formula; it is a direct reaction against the thunderous exuberance that shook the earth in 1912.

Within the last few months another group, under the leadership of Louis Zukofsky, has made an effort to unite in its demand for verbal discipline under the title "Objectivists 1931." An examination of the poetry written by the group reveals again the central theme of tragic disillusionment, but it is by implication rather than statement. The technical influences of Williams, Pound, E. E. Cummings, and T. S. Eliot are markedly evident; and it may be well to observe here that William Carlos Williams, as a creator of a poetic mythology indigenous to American soil, is a profound influence in American poetry today.

For the moment it seems as though we have come to the end of a period in which American poets have preached a gospel of fear and negation. Certain religious phases of Hart Crane's poetry and the reaction of the younger groups that I have indicated by the mention of Stanley Kunitz and Léonie Adams display characteristics of affirmation after defeat. Though the symbols of the waste-land mythology are those of terror and destruction, the very fact that they are created out of what seemed to be barren soil is evidence of an essential vitality at work in contemporary American literature. Despite its subject matter the poetry of the last eight years has shown no lack of imaginative power. The myths of Eliot and Jeffers are possessed of a terrifying will to endure. They have already provided a background for a new interpretation of poetry on the American continent.

Career

By KAY BOYLE

there are many ways now of being a young man
not so simple as plowing a field
spading a black patch
        strung thick with earthworms
or making love
a procession of lace handkerchiefs
swept up from lawns
        floors
            checkerboards

I would be finding a new way
to bend water making a fan of it
to chill the desert
brand cattle break horses with
            the pulse of the knee
        Spring nights would catch me
horning new timber down salmon-rivers
my breath at lonely corners linger all night
            with whiskey-singing
sun cracking whips upon my skin of hard man
speech running sweet
            raw
                high
                    under the hay

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Books, Films, Drama

Meditation in Forty-second Street

By JOHN GOULD FLETCHER

Sunlight falls in a long ragged sword-cut across—it swings downward
Over soaring acres of brown; the swift night approaches,
Night without end, the flute players of the white storm uplift
Out of the gulf again and the wind pits
Scarred beetling faces.

Night of strong winds and sheer frost, night set free to roam
Three thousand miles over fruitless plains, empty in sunlight:
What have you seen, have you seen, by what impulse
In the million-faced acres of casemented brick have you come here,
Why has fate set here a door?
The west-wandering peoples
Pass through and do not return: in the free rocky deserts
No one has counted their footsteps:
Their trail is utterly lost.

How shall we shape here, define
Tower from tower when each changes;
Proteus-like assuming some new incarnation,
Altering in form but not purpose; change on the surface;
Under the skin bare rivets that bite into steel,
The groans of loosening stone.

How weigh the weight of these towers,
Seeming so tranquil, indifferent to the life that was burnt up to make them;
And makes them tirelessly anew; in what new sphere must we set them,
Freed from the jangle of noise that still follows; the hoarse diapason
Of horns, hammers, sirens, and gongs—dare they ignore these?
Frozen in lunar night, can their chasm-walls drink only sunlight?
Can they know, can they feel, can they see?

Clamor of impotent impulse beats here against being;
Vainly the towers strain against the sense of life surging beyond them,
Life without meaning or rest, but life like an insect,
Tirelessly heaping the million-celled heap a little higher;
Burying its tiny eggs in domes that were built for free giants;
Rending the nest apart, and scurrying off into shelter.

Men have dreamed gods before in Athenian sunlight;
The coursers of night and of day watched the free contest
Of the olive-strown rock and the sea:
And in Florence
Angelo, tortured by hope, set his listless dreams: thought and stilled action
Over the struggling limbs of reclining Night and Day.
But these gods were gods of a human sort; their stretched effort
Spread from shrines and towers into fields, over the free open woodlands,
Summoning the sap of a million growths toward their harvest,
Man's mind made one with the tireless renewal of nature:
Here, wave upon wave, the stone
Shuts nature out; like sea-cliffs riddled by swallows,
These challenge the spirit, that dares not encompass their meaning;
Set beyond good or evil, or mind and unmind; sheer power that braces its shoulders
Against the void and the darkness;
Not human; a dream of the night that the mind dares not utter
Though drawn from the limitless depths of the human will.

Before Dawn

By LOUIS UNTERMEYER

And where the hill went sliding down the south
Into a closed infinity of night,
One star, and one alone, and none too bright,
Came to dispute the darkness and our drought;
One meager hint, one glimmering drop for both,
Parched with dry prayers, soiled with the smell of blight—
And you were all for turning back in fright,
And there were only ashes in my mouth.

Then the one star went out, and something happened,
Something beyond the boundaries of sight.
Something unrolled the darkness; darkness ripened,
Fold on upwelling fold, height over height.
Darkness turned upon darkness; darkness opened
To light, light all-compelling, nothing but light.

Epitaph of a Generation

The Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens. Harcourt, Brace and Company. Two Volumes. $7.50.

THERE should be another name for this rare sort of book: the word "autobiography" is misleading. To be sure, Lincoln Steffens has told here the story of his own life—a part of it, at any rate; but, like Mill and Tolstoy and Henry Adams, he has mainly done something else, and that a more fruitful thing than most self-portraitists succeed in doing. He has written the psychological history and, so to say, the extended epitaph of a whole generation, a whole social movement, a whole class. There is something cartographic about such a book. One reads it with a sense of getting one's bearings in a half-familiar territory for the first time: unrelated by-paths and gullies and hillocks gradually arrange themselves in an intelligible pattern, north becomes unmistakably north, and south south. One stands in a somewhat clearer relation than ever before to one's immediate predecessors, and everyone knows the exhilarating effects of such a change. A book like this is, intellectually, a great economy: it enables generations, as if they were developing individuals, to accumulate experience, to profit even by abortive experiments, to avoid

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the mere marking of time, and to push on into new realms.

Mr. Steffens's autobiography, to be specific, is the obituary of American reformism, progressivism, liberalism; it is at once the story of and the verdict upon the whole first phase of the movement in this country against privilege, inequality, individualism—the phase that found its characteristic expression in middle-class "social work," in muckraking, in trust-busting, and in reform legislation. Not that these things have not been appraised and found wanting many times before; not that a later generation than Mr. Steffens's has not passed through disillusion and either relapsed into cynicism or moved on to newer forms of positive action. But the whole story has not hitherto been told by a man who could boast of having been *magna pars* in the movement itself, who had lived out in his own person the whole cycle of enthusiasm and disenchantment and reorientation, and who could speak at once personally and perspectively. Indeed, if another man exists who is better qualified for the task than Lincoln Steffens, I do not know who he is. A dozen other men and women were perhaps as close to the center of the movement as this financial reporter for the *Post* under Edwin L. Godkin, this editor of *McClure's* and the *American* in the palmy days of muckraking, this author of "The Shame of the Cities" and "The Struggle for Self-Government," this friend of Croker and Roosevelt and R. S. Baker and Darrow, of Upton Sinclair and La Follette and Ben Lindsey and Fremont Older, this interviewer of many a boss and many a bribe-taker. But did any of them see through, as Steffens did, the badness of "good men" and the unreliability of upright citizens, or see into the goodness of "bad men" and the curious honesty of the crooks? Did any of them understand, as he gradually did, the inevitable role of corruption and venality in a badly organized society based on privilege? Did any of them, after beginning with the friendship and the views of Jacob Riis and Norman Hapgood, end with a sympathetic understanding of the purposes, on the one hand, of Lenin and, on the other, of Henry Ford?

What all this implies is what makes his autobiography so absorbing a document—a wonderful intellectual plasticity against a background of intellectual integrity, an exceptional union of social imagination with personal intuitiveness. One thinks of the type reformer, of his inflexible commitment to a formula, his indifference to individuals, his dyspeptic zeal: how little of all this there is in Lincoln Steffens! So little that if his book had no other value it would have the richest interest just pictorially or just dramatically, as reminiscence, as evocation, as narrative. There is the most effortless humor, the most natural tenderness, in his account of a California boyhood in the prosperous, innocent days after the Civil War. There is the pleasantest profane exuberance in his picture of undergraduate life in Berkeley in the '80's and of the following years in German university towns and in Paris. But of course the interest of these early chapters remains rather strictly personal. It is when he reaches the period of his newspaper life in New York in the '90's—of his journalistic career in Wall Street during the panic, of his work as a police reporter in the days of Parkhurst and Schmittberger and Riis and Roosevelt—that Mr. Steffens begins to be the inspired chronicler. Nothing could be more spirited or more startling in the effect of truth than the scenes, for example, in which the vehement, the spurious Roosevelt holds the stage; or the glimpses of J. P. Morgan lowering like a great beast in his inner office; or the unstudied reports of illuminating conversations with malefactors like Matthew Quay and Martin Lomasney; or the picture of Paris during the Peace Conference and of Moscow before and after the October Revolution. It is not for nothing that Mr. Steffens got his training as a journalist: the reporter of genius was never lost in the reformer, and this book is the winner accordingly.

But he has been more than a reporter, just as he has been more than a reformer: if the word did not have too many portentous connotations for so genial a man, one would say that he has been a kind of prophet. At any rate, if to be a prophet is to have a true humility of mind and spirit, to grasp imaginatively the conflicts of one's time, to apprehend the relation between men and events, to be capable of disenchantment without bitterness or negation, then Lincoln Steffens has been something of a prophet, and this book has something of the stateliness of prophecy. I do not mean that it embraces the sum of social and personal wisdom, but I do mean that it is full of invaluable hints and intimations. It suggests how the transition can be made from a plastic liberalism to a resourceful and humane radicalism. It suggests how social movements can be given a personal and psychological as well as a collective aspect. It demonstrates, indirectly, the shabbiness of our fashionable cynicism. It is a source book for the critic, for the radical, for the man of action. But it is certainly not merely an "autobiography."

NEWTON ARVIN

Moore in Aulis

Aphrodite in Aulis. By George Moore. Brentano's. $2.50.

THIS may be the last book we are to have from George Moore. It was written during a long illness to which he had resigned himself as his last, and with a certain grim propriety it is dedicated to the physician who by his encouragement as much as by medicine kept him alive to complete it.

There is nothing in the book, however, of the laxity and the wandering mind of invalidism. Structurally, it is perhaps the firmest of Moore's novels; and there is no loosening of his smooth and scrupulous writing, the outcome of unwearied revision. Characteristically, Moore, to whom there is no such thing as a final script, has made revisions in this edition from what was announced as the definitive form in the first limited edition, adding another to the many similar grievances of his collectors.

The story begins with the dream of Kebren, an Athenian actor, whom a divine voice orders to Aulis. At Aulis he is given refreshment by Otanes, a rich merchant, whose daughter, Biote, proves more insistent than the ambition of Kebren to tour the cities of the Greek world to teach a new interpretation of the significance of Helen in the Homeric epics. Marrying Biote, he begets two sons, Rhesos and Thrasillos, the first of whom becomes a sculptor praised by Phidias, and the latter an architect. Rhesos is imperious and rebellious and the softer-willed Thrasillos follows him. There is an implication of incestuous desire on the part of Biote for her masterful son, Rhesos, in whom the artist she has loved and conquered in Kebren, her husband, is rearisen, unconquerable.

Rhesos and Thrasillos go to Athens and while they are there a series of earthquakes scourges coasts neighboring upon Aulis. In their terror the citizens of Aulis, led by Biote, urge the building of a temple to avert a similar visitation. The goddess chosen is Aphrodite, and Rhesos and Thrasillos are summoned to Aulis to carve her statue and build her dwelling. The temple rises, but Rhesos grows melancholy because he cannot finish his statue until he has seen a certain completing gesture that will make his sculpture divine. He sets out to consult Phidias, but the oxen that draw his cart take the road away from Athens to Tanagra, near which there is a little-known oracle. Its priestess bids him await Aphrodite on the shore at sunrise, and following this advice many mornings, he finally sees two girls walk naked from the surf, one of whom makes the gesture that Rhesos needs to animate his statue. This girl Rhesos marries, while Thrasillos wins the sister. Their marriage,

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taking Rhesos at last away from her, destroys the desire for love in Biote and from then on she sleeps apart from Kebren. At the end of the book there is a concourse of great men from Athens; Phidias and other notable sculptors, Euripides, Sophocles, and the boy-prodigy Aristophanes all come to admire the temple and its statue, and so to worship Aphrodite.

Thus, in her leisurely way, using up the lives of two generations of a family, possessing them by dreams and oracles when they lag in her purpose, Aphrodite comes to Aulis. There is little other idea in the book, though it would be easy to interpret and find allegories in it of the power of love. But it is not likely that Moore, who believes ideas to be the corruptible parts of a work of art, intended that such allegories be found in it.

The story is quietly told but very moving. Historians and archaeologists may quarrel with Moore and say these men and women are spurious Greeks, the children of the far-away Celtic renaissance. Skeptics, offended by gods and oracles, may debate its reality. Nevertheless, within the world created between its first and last word, and by all that is relevant to itself, there is not a hesitant moment in the book, nothing incredible, unreal, or unconvincing. Like every work of art, it adds its special reality to the realities of the world.

In manner all the characters are alike, all grave and courteous, even the capricious woman and the impetuous man. But under this calm appearance, the calm of quiet reminiscence, there is a subtle and sure building up of personality.

The writing is more fluid than ever. It seems to melt into the mind as one reads, but it recrystallizes in the mind, and is not lost as sometimes happens with faulty stylists. The effect is gained partly by the exquisite choice of words whose sounds mesh perfectly with each other, so that they run together, but the sense of flow itself is given by the present participle, which Moore uses probably more than any other writer in the whole range of English literature. There is no doubt of its occasional overuse in passages that would gain strength were they a little more rugged. To complain of it, however, is to no purpose. A virtue perhaps is not understood until it is practiced to excess.

Because of its exquisiteness critics have often denied strength to the work of George Moore; a ridiculous judgment. The power to arouse emotion and the power to realize character fully and firmly are in his work; other strengths in the writing of fiction are often delusive, mere harsh voices.

Although "Aphrodite in Aulis" does not rank in my mind with "Héloise and Abelard," having, I feel, a slighter story and a slighter command as well of its historical background, it is better articulated and more exquisitely constructed. It has beauty and grace. It is the work of a master.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER

What Are the English Like?

The Natives of England. By Henry W. Nevinson. Alfred A. Knopf. $3.

IN his preface Mr. Nevinson, the veteran journalist, remarks that it is impossible for one race ever to understand another. As prefaces are not seldom intended for signposts to reviewers, this statement may be taken as the equivalent of the road warning "dangerous curve ahead." However, the reviewer must proceed, and Mr. Nevinson himself devotes not a little space to quoting with approbation the wise comment of foreigners on the people and institutions of his own country.

This is but one of the many instances of illogicality in what in some ways is a most difficult book to review. It is at once delightful and irritating, comprehensive and inadequate, careful

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and slipshod. Familiar with the English scene by residence, intimate through cousinships that are of blood and not of rhetoric, I can appreciate the high quality of much of Mr. Nevinson's analysis of his countrymen, and at the same time as a foreigner can realize the false impression that both commissions and omissions may make upon those who have little or no knowledge of England.

The skeleton construction of the work is almost as precise as that of a doctoral thesis, the chapters being headed The Island Scene, The Race, The Monarchy, The Nobility, The Upper Classes, The Middle Classes, The Country Worker, The Workpeople, Interests of the English, and The English Base. This sounds formidably dry-as-dust, but in fact this logical skeleton disappears in the book as do the bones which we are quite unconscious of beneath the charming shroud of flesh of a smiling and inconsequential youth. The fault of the book is not erudition of the German type but amateurishness of the English sort. Nevinson has quite clearly written to please himself rather than to instruct even his own countrymen, much less the despised foreigner. For example, although he traces the history of the monarchy, tells us that there is no longer any demand for a republic, chats about the rather snobbish love of royalty by the people at large, and devotes nearly three pages to the king as head of the church, he gives the reader no inkling at all of the genuinely deep feeling of many Englishmen for the king as symbolizing in visible form the whole of the mental complex which they call "England," nor of the absolute necessity of a non-elected head of the Empire if the Empire is to hang together. Both these points are of the most profound importance when considering the English form of government, yet in twenty pages the author mentions neither of them, preferring to skim the surface with a good deal of irony and persiflage.

Here and there one may, with all modesty, disagree with specific statements, but on the whole the misleading statements, if I may be permitted a bull, are those which the author does not make. I have just illustrated this with regard to the monarchy. Another case is that of the Englishman's conception of "home," so different nowadays from that of any other of the dozen nationalities or so with whom I have some acquaintance. This is the more inexplicable as this is precisely one of the things about England which he says in his preface no foreigner can understand. He pokes fun at the rather stuffy interiors of the old country houses, but the spirit which animates them does not emerge. In the same way, for all Mr. Nevinson tells us, the Empire might almost be non-existent. The book is, of course, about England (though the two examples of "gentlemen" chosen to represent certain gentlemanly qualities are both Scotch!), but England itself as the island heart of empire is psychologically different from what it would be as a solitary island north of Europe.

The book, however, is a shrewd and delightful presentation of certain aspects of English life and character, marred a little in the earlier chapters by too great a straining after what, in connection with Mayor Walker, have attained notoriety as "wisecracks." Nevinson's sympathies have aways been with the working classes, and as he rises in his climactic series of chapters from the king and aristocracy to the miners and trawlers, his style becomes increasingly simple and sincere.

I do not know whether Nevinson is an Oxford man, who has been said to "walk as if the whole world belonged to him," or a Cambridge one "who walks as if he didn't give a damn whom the world belonged to," but he writes as either might in so far as he discusses what he wants to and nothing else. If the reader will remember that he is far from getting all of the English spirit and character in this book, he will get a lot that is true and worth while about both, set down delightfully and with wealth of illustration.

JAMES TRUSLOW ADAMS

An Honest Socialist

America's Way Out: A Program for Democracy. By Norman Thomas. The Macmillan Company. $2.50.

HERE is an honest book by an honest man. Convinced that in a world of power-driven machinery some form of collectivism is inevitable, satisfied that the lords of the new capitalism are incapable either of ruling without enslaving us or of bringing order into the present chaos of world economic disorganization and threatened war, unable to accept communism as the way out because its attainment frankly involves dictatorship and war, Norman Thomas believes that our American way of salvation lies in the attainment of socialism by peaceful and democratic means. He summarizes his work thus:

> My only claim to originality is in the choice and organization of material and in my attempt to present the necessity for socialism in our machine civilization, a philosophy for the necessary organization to carry it out, and grounds for hope that human nature does not make the task impossible—all these not as separate subjects but as essential and related parts of the Socialist case.

Readers will find here in one form or another most of the standard Socialist ideas and arguments, and most of the facts commonly alleged today in the United States in support of those arguments. But with his usual candor Norman Thomas has stated the Marxian theories in his own fashion, without any pretense of worshiping at the Marxian shrine. Those who want a full statement and criticism of the great corpus of Socialist theory, then, will turn elsewhere than to the present volume; nor will they find here more than the barest outline of Socialist history. Rather they will find a consideration of the present state of affairs in the United States, and an attempted way of mending that state of affairs without revolution or war, in a world which offers no certainty, but at best a reasonable hope, of such a change through intelligent and well-organized effort.

The Communists will damn the book—and rightly from their point of view—for its lack of cast-iron theory, for its endless compromises and its acceptance of halfway measures as means to the end. The orthodox Socialists will curse it for its inadequate presentation of the classical doctrines and records of socialism. The orthodox economists will scorn it for its failure to grapple with their theories. The historians will criticize it for its neglect to marshal large and impressive-looking bodies of fact. The stylistic and logical critics will pounce upon it for its lack of literary grace and of compelling order and arrangement of material. The ordinary intelligent reader will doubtless admit a measure of truth in all their criticisms, and then will remember that what he has been doing is to watch the honest thinking of a candid mind, trying to find a practical solution for a pressing problem of the utmost magnitude and complexity, in a situation that is not logical or orderly, that is not amenable to formulas, that calls for practical measures of thoroughgoing reconstruction taking full account of all the mountainous difficulties in the way of any effective action.

Ever since the war Norman Thomas has been steadily growing, not only in his command of the materials and the methods of economic and social advance, but in the respect and esteem of all classes of men, including those who disagree with him intellectually. His book is therefore assured of a wide welcome as a statement of his present faith, of the reasons why he holds it, and of the means by which he hopes to attain it. If that faith lacks something of the glow of the apocalyptic vision, if those reasons are none other than the reasons that

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have convinced many other thoughtful Americans, if the means are simply common-sense adaptations and developments of plans and devices already projected and partly worked out here and elsewhere, it is all but part of the genuineness of a book that does not pretend to be other than what it is, the best formulation that Norman Thomas has yet been able to make of America's Way Out. HENRY RAYMOND MUSSEY

California

Orange Valley. By Howard Baxter. Coward-McCann. $2.

TO find a parallel for a locality evoked so vividly as the valley of the San Joaquin in California is here evoked, one must go back to Anderson's "Winesburg, Ohio." The similarity of the two books, however, stops here. The characters in "Orange Valley" are more alert, less baffled than those in Sherwood Anderson's stories; but in both books is the same feeling for a particular locality—a locality so insistently presented to the imagination that in the end the slightest detail seems to evoke the whole setting, and at times even the whole manner of life of the characters.

The characters of "Orange Valley" are the fruit ranchers and their families; they are Easterners to whom the West seems essentially foreign. They have built up their groves in country that was once desert, and the problems they face are the communal problems of marketing, of water and frost. It is the daily round of the lives of these people that concerns the present author—the inconsequential business of irrigating, of sitting on the porches in the evening, of going to town, of driving over the mountains to the beach. These people are continually consoling themselves for the disappointments of their crops by believing that the next crop will be better than the last one, and in the meantime they know that the water is sinking steadily in the wells, and that a rush of alkali to the surface may destroy their groves. In the face of these conditions their individual problems seem somehow insignificant, even to themselves. The central character of the book, Charles Swanson, suppresses everything dramatic in his life; he quietly abandons his plans for marriage when his mother disapproves of Magine, the girl he wants to marry, and after his mother's death he avoids writing the letter that would bring his sweetheart to him. In the last chapters the emphasis changes from Charles to his sister, Juliana, and while Charles is paralyzed by doubts of Magine, largely because he cannot forgive her for having given herself to him, Juliana is tormented because she cannot force herself to surrender herself to her lover. The drama of "Orange Valley" is the drama of inaction and indifference, yet it is remarkable how well Mr. Baxter has succeeded in giving it movement and vigor. But, in the end, it is not through their personal troubles that the characters of "Orange Valley" reveal themselves. In the end we know Charles, not because of his struggle with himself when he learns that his sister may be pregnant, or through his cloudy romance with Magine, or through any of the complications of the novel, but through his trivial, meaningless actions as he moves about his house or his groves.

> When he turned toward the house he forced the blade of the hoe under the loose soil in order to make it stand like a milestone at the head of the middles in which the water was running. The tops of the trees were purple and jutted into a layer of coppery light, but down closer to the ground darkness lay in masses beside the trees. He could hear the water singing in a monotone as it fell from the standpipes, and the wild voices of the children at play floated clearly to him but with a strange rise and fall in intensity. The dim clatter of his or his neighbors'

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pumps was repeated at regular intervals, slow sounds as if the pumps paused to meditate before bending to a great effort.

There are needless repetitions in "Orange Valley," particularly in Charles's reflections about Magine. The opening chapters seem awkward and artificial, and there are occasional incongruous suggestions of Hemingway in the conversations—incongruous because these people are far removed from the self-conscious expatriates of Hemingway's particular world. But the positive virtues of the novel make its defects negligible. The California of Howard Baxter is neither the paradise of the advertisements nor the drowsy, prosperous country a traveler sees along the highways; it is a California that exists as a rich land inhabited by people who only dimly understand the poverty and monotony of their lives. A locality so clearly realized that it becomes neither local color nor a background for characterization, but an integral, motivating factor in the story—it is this that makes "Orange Valley" a remarkable achievement.

ROBERT CANTWELL

Handbook of a New Religion

American Caravan IV: A Yearbook of American Literature. Edited by Alfred Kreymborg, Lewis Mumford, and Paul Rosenfeld. The Macaulay Company. $5.

ONE question occurs to everyone when a new issue of the "American Caravan" appears: Is it any better than the others? It appears to be a sensible question. As a matter of fact it betrays a basic misconception of what the "Caravan" is—as well as that tragic American impatience which has created the get-rich-quick system in business, the super-spectacle system in the movies, the genius system in literature. Unless the new "Caravan" contains thirty-seven geniuses, we say in effect, we don't want to look at it. The reason is simple: the "Caravan" is the mirror of ourselves.

What do we see when we look into it, what makes so many of us curse the whole idea and turn away? Immaturity, immaturity undisguised. The "Caravan" represents one of our few attempts to be honest with ourselves, to see ourselves in the nude. As such alone it would be one of the most important literary institutions in America. The geographical patriotism that it expresses is something we can all admire; in fact, it may even amount to a "standard" around which we all can rally. Walt Whitman, of course, is the "Caravan's" prophet, and its aim, like his, is to make America conscious of herself. Such an aim is not primarily artistic but religious. The "Caravan," therefore, is really addressed to those who make a religion of their country. Artistically it is of little value. If you are looking for the "aesthetic emotion," look somewhere else. If you are looking for geniuses—I assume that you would know one if you saw one—you had better subscribe to a club that will guarantee to mail you a new one every month. This year's "Caravan" is still no better than the first. The reason is simple: American life, of course, is exactly the same as it was four years ago.

It would be ridiculous then to criticize the "Caravan" strictly from the standpoint of achieved art. It is the crude handbook of a new religion, the religion of America. As a whole it can be criticized only on the basis of how clearly those in charge of it have kept its essential purpose in mind. Without forgetting the good things that have been printed, it has been apparent to everyone that each issue has contained several items which had no place in such a book. These editorial mistakes would seem to be due principally to the desire for novelty and "well-roundedness," neither of which, if we remember its purpose, has anything to do with the "Caravan." The

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novelty of adolescents, for the most part, is either crankiness or concealed imitation; and "well-roundedness" is merely a publisher's cliché. The duty of the editors is not to provide us with a literary banquet (which if we ate it would only make us sick), but to spy the significant men among the manuscripts and to offer the encouragement of regular publication to their development.

This year the editors have splendidly done their duty in the inclusion of an essay called Art and Identity, by Ferner Nuhn. This essay is the outstanding contribution to "American Caravan IV." It attacks the problem of the formation of an American culture and imposes the obligations that must be assumed by the individual American artist. It is evident that Mr. Nuhn has prepared himself for his subject with much reading, travel, and thought; but above all that he has a strong new spirit. Though excellently informed and under no illusions, he has lost none of his earnestness; and he writes with both vigor and sensibility. The stoicism that he advocates is most significant. There is no sense in extravagant prophecies, but on the strength of this essay alone, though I have since acquainted myself with his other published work, I may say that I feel confident of Mr. Nuhn's future importance. And it should be noted in passing that his remarkable essay in all likelihood could have been published nowhere else.

Of the different groups of material, I should say, the short stories maintain the highest standard. Some of the contributors to this section are Paul Rosenfeld, S. Guy Endore, Jonathan Leonard, William Faulkner, Evelyn Scott, Robert Penn Warren, Joseph Vogel, and Robert Cantwell. The best of the stories, in my opinion, is that by Mr. Rosenfeld, The Dark Brown Room, which recalls one moment from the Victorian back parlor of a genteel German-Jewish family in New York. Thought and feeling have fused well in this story; it is a well-considered expression of Mr. Rosenfeld's personality, one of his best works. If it does not convey the pathos of its situation, it succeeds notably in conveying the emotion of its author. This emotion, which comes to us wrapped in a tender sophistication and sensuality, is interesting and underived.

Special mention should be made of three modest contributors whom it seems unusually appropriate to find in the "Caravan." They are Philip Stevenson and Albert Halper, who have written stories, and James Henry Sullivan, who has written a visionary essay about architecture. As writers these three are hardly expert: Mr. Stevenson continually misses fire; Mr. Halper falls down when he comes to the very point of his story; and Mr. Sullivan as often as not is unintelligible. Yet the spirit of each is extremely attractive and is allied, moreover, to that religion of America which we have mentioned. In a time when purity of purpose is a rare thing, we can only be glad that the "Caravan" has encouraged these three. And it might be noted that the work of Mr. Stevenson, who has contributed to earlier numbers, shows definite improvement over the past.

It is plain that the value of the "Caravan" as an institution depends upon its permanence and regularity. As we have said, the principal duty of the editors is to realize and be true to its essential purpose. Common sense will dictate the same policy to the publishers. They are mistaken if they believe that the "Caravan" will ever earn much money for them. By its nature it is doomed to be unpopular; its sale will be restricted to that small minority which still, in a world that is doping itself with gloss and falsehood, desires self-knowledge. If the publishers wish to continue the excellent service they have performed, rather than be halted by expense, let them be economical. If necessary let the "Caravan" be printed on newsprint and bound in paper. The important thing is to keep going, to outrage the entire nation with this likeness of itself.

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The World of William Faulkner

Sanctuary. By William Faulkner. Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith. $2.50.

AMONG the characters of Mr. Faulkner's latest novel are a murderer, an ex-harlot, a drunkard, two half-wits, a nymphomaniac, a degenerate child, three procuresses, and a *voyeur*. The action of the book includes two cold-blooded killings, an emasculation, a lynching by gasoline fire, a jazz party in honor of a gunman's corpse, and a particularly inhuman sexual assault. In his search for the perfect Inferno Mr. Faulkner makes no Dantesque journeys—his hell lies in the territory of northern Mississippi. There is no recent book better contrived to send Mr. Irving Babbitt into a (restrained) fit of delirium tremens.

But the book is real, there is no doubt of it. Mr. Faulkner has an almost Joycean power of exteriorizing his horror-obsession. His damned and distorted cosmos *is* a cosmos. It is not a private belly-ache. And because it is a cosmos, obeying laws of its own, self-sufficient, shaped and dynamic, one cannot deny to Mr. Faulkner the title of creator. By virtue of this book alone he at once takes his place among the foremost of the younger generation of American novelists. He is an original.

And yet it is not hard to understand the point of view of the sweetness-and-lighters who are dismayed by his "sadism" and his morbidity. One cannot, of course, challenge an artist's choice of materials; one can only challenge his manipulation of them. Perhaps I am merely tender-minded, but it seems to be that "Sanctuary," while startling and intensely interesting, is not overwhelming—and it might very well have been. It fails to overwhelm chiefly because it makes an exaggerated attack on the reader's nervous system. Here we have a book curiously akin to the eighteenth-century Gothic tale of horror. It makes use of similar mechanisms—dark hints, desolate backgrounds, unrelievedly black villains. But, instead of the flesh, it makes the mind and viscera creep. Each individual page is a calculated assault on one's sense of the normal, like the clever incantations and manual passes of the hypnotist. But while one succumbs to the hypnotist one does not quite succumb to Mr. Faulkner. His book induces a sort of stoic behavior-response; one wants to fight back against these repeated shocks, these impacts of horror. As a result, so much nervous energy is expended in this nervous resistance that the sensitive faculties which should lead you to abandon yourself to Mr. Faulkner's witchcraft are actually in part inhibited. The imagination gets charley-horse.

Mr. Faulkner's descriptive style, too, for all its terrific cleverness (I am speaking particularly of his cruelly evocative observation of unpleasant sensory impressions) is a little too taut, too strained. The hypnotist works too hard. Each sentence bears more than its due freight of tenseness, innuendo, horror, and fear. One's sense of the normal, at first paralyzed by the impact of this coiled and deadly prose, at last reawakens—and the spell is, for the moment, broken. There is a kind of artistic detachment so icy as to induce in the reader nervous terror rather than aesthetic submission. Accordingly, the more thoughtless critic may find it easy to accuse Mr. Faulkner of mere maliciousness; he may urge that ugliness, while it can be pushed to the point of art, can never pass the threshold beyond which lies the genuinely tragic. But I do not think that there is anything loosely gratuitous in Mr. Faulkner's morbidities. He has simply made a slight error in the calculation of his effects. He must learn when to pull his punches.

From almost every point of view "Sanctuary" is a better book than either "As I Lay Dying" or "The Sound and the Fury." Its construction, however, is more open to criticism. It is really two novels, not one. The story of Horace Benbow,

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unsuccessful as lawyer, husband, and idealist, forms one novel. That of Popeye and Temple Drake forms another. They revolve about one another like the components of a binary star system, connected by lines of force but none the less separated. Also, there are certain bravura passages, gorgeous in themselves, but which as far as the necessities of the plot are concerned seem dragged in by the ears. Examples are the Hogarthian humors of Reba's gin party and the horrible grotesquerie of Red's funeral.

There are other weaknesses in the book but they are all resultant from the copiousness of the author's imagination. Possibly he has tried to do too much. His faults are the faults of excessive eagerness. He remains, for me at least, with Ernest Hemingway and Conrad Aiken, among the most interesting young novelists now writing in America.

CLIFTON P. FADIMAN

Russia

The Red Trade Menace. By H. R. Knickerbocker. Dodd, Mead and Company. $2.50.

Soviet Foreign Trade—Menace or Promise. By J. M. Budish and Samuel S. Shipman. Horace Liveright. $2.50.

The Soviet Challenge to America. By George S. Counts. The John Day Company. $4.

Making Bolsheviks. By Samuel N. Harper. University of Chicago Press. $2.

Piatiletka—Russia's Five Year Plan. By Michael Farbman. New Republic, Inc. $1.

A VERITABLE avalanche of books about Russia has descended on America during the last two months. More are coming—at the rate of three a week. Most of them deal, directly or indirectly, with the Five-Year Plan. Someone has said that if people don't stop talking about the Five-Year Plan it will have a nervous breakdown. But I suppose it is inevitable that the world and the United States in particular should show increasing interest in the Soviet Union's domestic and foreign affairs. Imagine how happy Einstein would be if he could leave this earth of ours, travel for eight days through the ether, and then set up his telescopes and other paraphernalia on a little observation planet from which he could measure, and check his theories. Bolshevik Russia affords the bourgeois expert an opportunity of getting off the capitalist globe and looking back on it for purposes of comparison. When capitalism suffers by that comparison, Russia begins to constitute a challenge to the bourgeoisie to put its house in order or abdicate. This is the real "red menace," and the real reason why even the relative success of the Five-Year Plan has alarmed the Western world. If a system of economy and government which denies the wisdom and efficacy of capitalism can register even slight progress, capitalism thinks it must be on its guard.

A year ago the man who suggested that the Five-Year Plan might be fulfilled was a "Bolshevik agent." The Five-Year Plan was a statistician's dream. Now bourgeois specialists themselves proclaim Soviet accomplishments. Today it is the pro-Bolshevik who holds up a cautioning finger and warns against vaulting from the extreme of skepticism to the extreme of exaggerating Soviet achievements. For this reason a book like Knickerbocker's "Red Trade Menace" is misleading, though it contains many important truths—and, incidentally, some untruths. There is no Soviet trade menace, just as there is no convict labor in the production of Russian export timber. The proof cannot be adduced in a book review. This morning the assertion may sound rash. Some day it will be accepted just as naturally as the thesis of stability of the Soviet regime and

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the success of the Five-Year Plan. On this point "Soviet Foreign Trade—Menace or Promise" can be read with profit. It presents a mass of significant data on Russia's world commerce and on labor in the U. S. S. R.

The best book I have seen on the Five-Year Plan is George S. Counts's "Soviet Challenge to America." I recommend it especially to those who may believe that planned economy is possible under capitalism. For Counts demonstrates that the Five-Year Plan is not an office economist's blueprint, but a map of Soviet life itself. The author shows how political, social, and cultural activities dovetail with the construction of plants and dams, and how coordinated and charted economy integrates with proletarian participation in industry, the activity of local soviets, indeed with every feature of the Soviet governmental system. This book is consequently not merely a good description of the Five-Year Plan, but a useful handbook on Soviet politics. Professor Counts makes it plain that the object of the plan is as much "making Bolsheviks" as making tractors.

Professor Harper's little volume of lectures is an interesting addendum to a study of the plan. But although written in simple language his "Making Bolsheviks" assumes considerable knowledge of Russian conditions and Bolshevik principles. It will mean much to the person acquainted with Russia; it will bewilder the beginner. The author does not delineate Russian social types. He merely outlines the role in Soviet society played by groups now emerging: the Communists, the Young Communists, the class-conscious workers, the collectivized peasants, the culture crusaders, and the ideologically red soldiers. The book is written without evident bias. The author is at times cynical, at times skeptical, but never hostile. Nevertheless, Dr. Harper encountered the difficulties that would face any scientist trying to photograph a fetus swimming confusedly in its opaque element.

As a dynamic description of the Five-Year Plan in the short compass of a 35,000-word *New Republic* dollar book, Michael Farbman's volume has no peer. He sees with the keen eye of a fine economist and able analyst. Since he can compare the ante-bellum and post-bellum Russias, and since he combines the warm, nervous temperament of the native Russian with the dispassion of a man who has lived many years in England and written brilliantly for leading British dailies and periodicals, his product possesses an intimacy and a sense of understanding lacking in many other treatments of the Five-Year Plan. And yet it too, like all the books under review, is only an attempt at social photography. A moment in the development of a great revolution is caught by a portable typewriter-camera. Since 1917 I suppose three hundred books on Russia have appeared in the United States. Those that can be read with profit two years after publication could be counted on the fingers of two hands.

LOUIS FISCHER

Jane and Thomas

The Two Carlyles. By Osbert Burdett. Houghton Mifflin Company. $4.

THE straining of strong natures held in the bonds of marriage by an indissoluble attachment has been a favorite theme of the novel, taxing the art of so sure a realist as Arnold Bennett in "These Twain." It is still more fascinating in real life, in the relations of a man and a woman of genius. For the married history of Thomas and Jane Carlyle there is a great mass of documents, permitting posterity to scrutinize with microscopic detail. The celebrated Froudean controversy, recently summarized by Mr. Waldo Dunn, has enlisted strong passions in favor of husband or

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wife. Consequently, an already whetted appetite welcomes Mr. Burdett's proposal to treat the subject without partisanship as "a work of imagination."

The expectation of a dramatic story with psychological penetration is disappointed. Not that Mr. Burdett is inaccurate or skimping with his materials. Despite his disclaimer of scholarly professionalism, he has examined almost everything pertinent, even reading through Carlyle's "Frederick," an uncommon feat nowadays. But the book is weak precisely where he intended it to be strong—as a work of imagination. Conventional standards are applied to an extraordinary marriage. Such generalizations as "woman, the ivy, naturally clings" are irrelevant to the strong-minded Jane. Mr. Burdett assumes her chief cause for unhappiness to have been childlessness; there are eleven references to that topic, spread through 134 pages. Yet upon no point is the evidence more doubtful and conflicting. He likewise fails to create the impression of Carlyle's titanic stature, and to comprehend the sympathy for the suffering masses and the grappling with great social and intellectual problems that brought his difficult moods of gloom, pity, and scorn, his complaints of the intolerable labor of writing. Reduced to this scale, the Chelsea household loses tragic significance. Mr. Burdett even disappoints us of the vivid, spicy writing we have come to expect from the new biography. He is politer and fairer, but also flatter, than most of his predecessors in the mode. The pulses of the professional biographer are languid; the once swift Strachean current strains through sands and shallows.

The work can hardly be recommended as a primer to its subject: it seems adapted neither to the idly curious nor to the serious. The latter had better go directly to Froude's biography, which Mr. Burdett praises highly in his closing chapters, or to what he calls the "mosaic" of Mr. D. A. Wilson, from whom he has borrowed extensively. Justice to the incandescent Carlyle temperaments requires the powers of the Meredith of "Modern Love." Mr. Burdett's attempt irresistibly recalls a couplet Carlyle was wont to apply to similar cases:

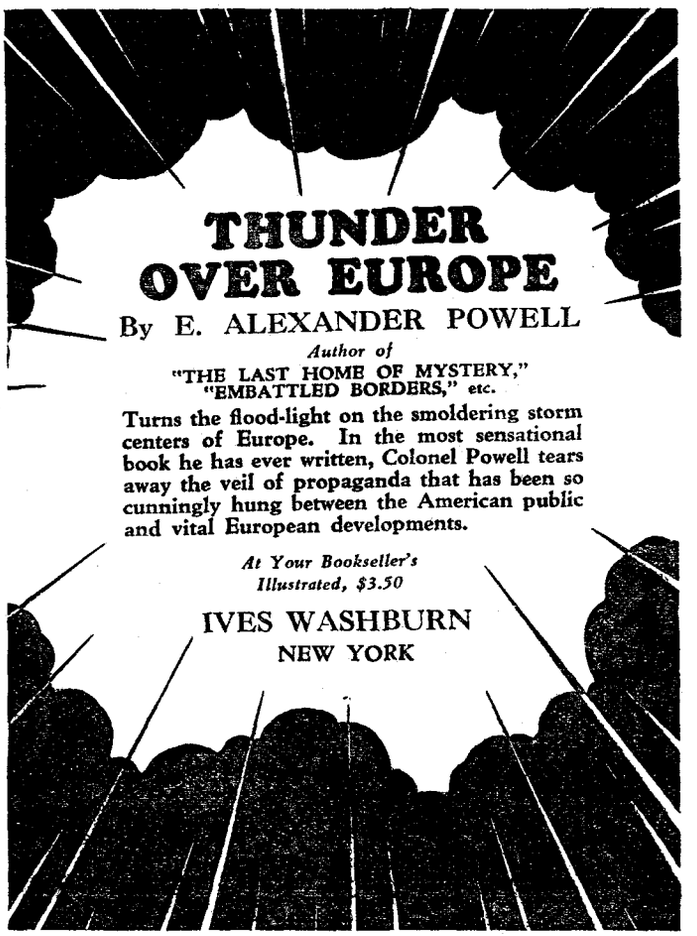
> Weightiest of harrows, what horse will ply it?
> Cheeriest of sparrows meanwhile will try it.

EMERY NEFF

A Reviewer of Plays

Upstage. By John Mason Brown. W. W. Norton and Company. $3.

THE scope of Mr. Brown's book is indicated in its subtitle, "The American Theater in Performance." We are treated here to an all-star cast comprising the principal figures among the present-day American playwrights, actors, directors, scene-designers, and dramatic critics. Each "performer" is discussed in a separate essay, and each group of "performers," according to their special art, is introduced by a general essay on the condition of their particular sphere of theatrical activity. The presentation is completed with two chapters on theater architecture and on the audience. Mr. Brown's writing is extremely readable, his manner urbane. He shows a sound appreciation of the fundamentals of the art of the theater, and reveals a penetrating and sensitive mind in analyzing the subjects of his portrait studies. His essays on Philip Barry, Eugene O'Neill, Otis Skinner, Alexander Woollcott, and George Jean Nathan—to name only a few—are admirable for the skill and discernment with which they bring into relief the salient characteristics of their respective subjects. In Barry, for instance, he sees not only an entertainer with a happy gift for delightful flippancy, but also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a rather shallow moralist whose comedies "laugh in order to preach." Nor is he blinded by O'Neill's earnestness, his savage force, and his vibrant prose into a reverent admiration of his helpless flounderings as a "foggy-minded coiner of cosmic beatitudes." These and other comments of Mr. Brown's are evidence of his ability to probe below the surface. Yet the book as a whole leaves the impression of an author studiously refraining from sounding the depths of his subject. As if to justify his classification of dramatic critics into reporters, reviewers, and critics, Mr. Brown chooses the part of a reviewer.

He dispenses praise and blame without once comparing the achievement of the American artists of the theater with that of the artists in other countries. Is Philip Barry only a sentimental Noel Coward? Is Eugene O'Neill a much more important dramatist than Leonid Andreyev? Mr. Brown does not tell us, and so we are left to view the American theater with the perspective of world standards carefully blacked out.

ALEXANDER BAKSHY

Abraham Cowley

Abraham Cowley: The Muse's Hannibal. By Arthur H. Nethercot. Oxford University Press. $4.75.

A BIOGRAPHY of Abraham Cowley has somewhat more meaning today than it would have had thirty, even fifteen, years ago. Of the group of seventeenth-century poets to which Cowley belonged Mr. T. S. Eliot has remarked that they possessed "a mechanism of sensibility which could devour any kind of experience." Although they lived in an age which was quite as much beset by new and exciting developments in science and philosophy as our own, they were able to amalgamate in their verse the most disparate experience, create new wholes of poetic vision. The task before them was to comprehend in its totality the universe that had suddenly expanded around them; their method was an ever-richer refinement of the sensibility. Since Mr. Eliot pointed out the resemblance between the problems solved by this group and the problems with which the contemporary poet is faced, the reputation of the former has increased until it is now, as Professor Nethercot remarks, highly dangerous not to agree that John Donne was one of the major English poets. Moreover, their influence on current poetic writing promises to surpass even that of the French symbolists. It is, indeed, rather a triumph for some contemporary poets to have their work mistaken for something by Donne or Marvell or Cowley.

Cowley, to be sure, is not usually spoken of in the same breath with the other two poets mentioned; he lacked the fierce Elizabethan attack of Donne, and he wrote nothing in his own vein to compare with Marvell's "Coy Mistress." But, as Professor Nethercot's scholarly life proves for us, his promise was more significant than his accomplishment. No poet of his century was more aware of the necessity of doing something *as a poet* with the body of scientific material cast up by the Renaissance. He was a student of medicine, botany, and "experimental philosophy" in general. His was one of the first names to be put on the membership list of the Royal Society in 1660. His later and most ambitious projects had for their object the integration of scientific with poetic experience. Altogether he was, in direction at least, a more comprehensive and for his own time a more truly contemporary poet than Milton.

Professor Nethercot offers an interesting history of the various confusions that have surrounded the term "metaphysical" as applied to the poets who succeeded Donne. At first the adjective referred to the habit of Donne and others of introducing abstruse philosophical speculations into their amatory verse. Parallel to this use of the word to describe subject

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matter or content was its application to certain qualities of manner or style—conceits, far-fetched metaphors, and general over-elaborateness of expression. According to Mr. Eliot (whom Professor Nethercot strangely neglects to mention anywhere in his book) Cowley was too often "metaphysical" in the latter and more superficial sense. He became so enamored of decoration that his complexity is merely affectation.

It is because this particular danger is so imminent for those contemporary poets who follow in his tradition that Cowley is of special interest today. For the present we must expect our poets to be "difficult" because of the excessive strain that is placed on their capacity for assimilation and fusion. But "difficulty" may easily become a fashion, a mode, a mere system of artifice—as in those poets who have emulated the manner without ever having experienced the intense intellectual passion implied in the "metaphysical" style from Donne's day to our own. A modern Dr. Johnson may already complain that in certain contemporary poets "the most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together." The example of Cowley, who was almost a great poet, should point to the consequences of violence cultivated for its own sake, as a mere mannerism.

WILLIAM TROY

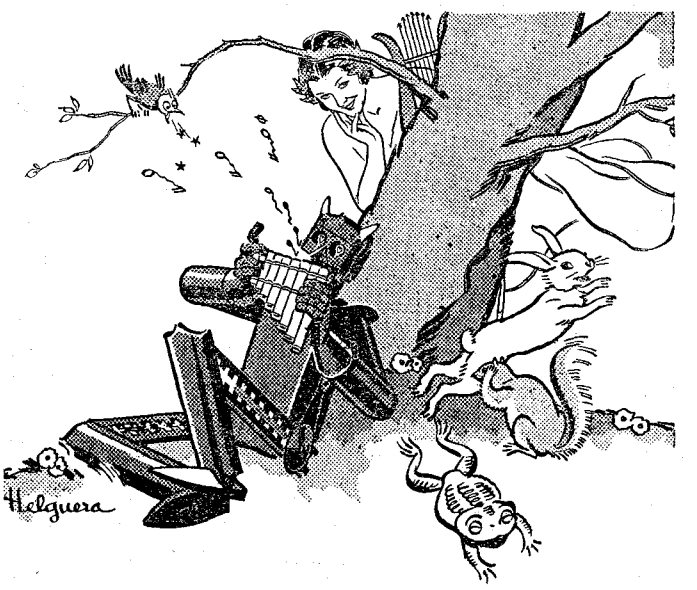
Books in Brief

Politics. By H. J. Laski. J. B. Lippincott Company. $1.

This new addition to the Hour Library is not any too easy a book for the man-in-the-Pullman. It provides, however, for the attentive reader a clear and unadorned sketch of the current progressive theory of the nature of the state, of its relations with the great society, and of the functions of law and government. Granted the limited space available, it appears dubious whether Professor Laski would not have provided his readers with more provocative material had he discussed, for example, the effect of anthropological research upon the deliberate modification of political institutions and control of civilization rather than the technicalities of second-chamber reform. His allusion, again, to the socialization of the law is all too brief in proportion to its contemporary interest. Anyone, however, who purchases a volume by Professor Laski may always be confident that he will get his money's worth, and this book is no exception. "The legal imperatives of any state must always be conceived as . . . a permanent essay in the conditional mood." Phrases such as this enter into the lasting literature of a subject; one of them alone might provide the intelligent reader with material for all of his allocated hour of thought.

The Cambridge Ancient History. Volume VIII: Rome and the Mediterranean, 218-133 B. C. Edited by S. A. Cook, F. E. Adcock, M. P. Charlesworth. The Macmillan Company. $10.50.

The eighty-five years covered by the latest volume in the "Cambridge History" saw the foundation of the Roman Empire. The Second and Third Punic Wars, the subjugation of the Hellenistic monarchies in Macedonia and Asia Minor, and the extinction of Greek freedom in the overthrow of the Achaean League made Rome supreme over all the shores and all the islands of the Mediterranean. The account is ably written. The authorities who contribute the twenty-one chapters of this volume are competent writers as well as scholars. This is characteristic of "The Cambridge Ancient History" as a whole, and it is a mistake to regard it only as a reference work. Every volume is readable and passages of authoritarian quibbling are relatively few. The whole undertaking is infused with the broad historical conception of the late J. B. Bury, its first editor. His successors ably carry on his work.



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Cross Roads of the Java Sea. By Hendrik De Leeuw. Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith. $3.50.

Dr. De Leeuw's travels brought him to Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Celebes, and Bali, the principal possessions of the Dutch empire in the East Indies. A certain complacent practical-mindedness that lets him appreciate the beauties of oil wells, mines, and factories along with the lavish tropical scenery keeps him also from the extravagances of recent writers who locate paradises anywhere but at home. His book is interesting because he had energy, was not too squeamish in his curiosity, and apparently felt at home everywhere; the insensitiveness, however, that permitted this makes his travel record a peculiarly superficial one.

A Pagan's Pilgrimage. By Llewelyn Powys. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.50.

This small volume represents the precipitate left in the alembic of the author's mind after it had produced "The Cradle of God." Asking with a truly pagan receptivity, "How do I know that Jesus was not actually a God?" Llewelyn Powys went to Palestine "to look for traces of his earthly sojourning." Impressions of that pilgrimage are here set down in vivid brevity. Poetic and philosophic reflections are intermingled with notes of things seen in southern Italy, Greece, Cyprus, Rhodes, and Syria. Slight as these sketches are, they have the authentic stamp of Mr. Powys's verbal artistry.

The Comedy of Manners from Sheridan to Maugham. By Newell W. Sawyer. University of Pennsylvania Press. $3.

Mr. Sawyer has written a very satisfactory definition of the kind of comedy whose history he tells, and his running account of innumerable plays will make his work highly valuable for reference. The criticism is not always inspired, but it is responsible and intelligent; and it may very well assist the cause of comedy here and in England during the years of promise that seem to lie ahead.

Films

Too Much Halo

WE are all interested in newspapers and what newspapermen write about their calling. The business of supplying us with our daily scandal, if we are to believe these chroniclers turned novelists and playwrights, is in itself full of scandal. Moreover, it has its thrills which, as they are pictured in books and plays, can stand comparison with the most exciting experiences of the world of crime. We are reminded of all this by that extraordinarily vivid picture of newspaper life "The Front Page," by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur, which has now emerged as a film (Rivoli). Granting it its trenchant dialogue and the sculpturesque sureness of its characterization, the only question it stirs in my mind is whether it gives a true picture of the newspaper world. It is the glamor, the romantic halo, surrounding the characters of "The Front Page" that arouses one's suspicions about the authenticity of the men portrayed. Aren't they a trifle too hard-boiled to be wholly credible? And if the authors are right in their characterization, aren't they guilty of a certain lack of honesty in treating this hard-boiled cynicism as standing for some superior knowledge and understanding of life, instead of being merely what it is, a protective mechanism of inferior intelligence against the demands of life? Perhaps if we had been allowed a glimpse under the callous masks worn by these re-

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WITHIN THE FORTNIGHT

Plays to See

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‡Fine and Dandy—Erlangers—W. 44 St.
*Five Star Final—Cort—48 St. E. of B'way.
*Getting Married—Guild—52 St. W. of B'way.
*Grand Hotel—National—W. 41 St.
*House Beautiful—Apollo—W. 42 St.
‡Meet My Sister—Shubert—44 St. W. of B'way.
*Miracle of Verdun—Beck—45 St. W. of 8 Ave.
†Once in a Lifetime—Music Box—W. 45 St.
*Private Lives—Times Square—W. 42 St.
*The Admirable Crichton—New Amsterdam—W. 42 St.
*The Barretts of Wimpole Street—Empire—49 St. and B'way.
†The Greeks Had a Word For It—Harris—42 St. W. of B'way.
*The Green Pastures—Mansfield—W. 47 St.
‡The New Yorkers—Broadway—44 St. W. of B'way.
‡Three's a Crowd—Selwyn—W. 42 St.
*Tomorrow and Tomorrow—Miller—43 St. E. of B'way.
†Vinegar Tree—Playhouse—48 St. E. of B'way.

* Drama. † Comedy. ‡ Musical.

Films

Zwei Herzen Im 3-4 Takt—Europa—55 St. E. of 7 Ave.
News Reel—Embassy—B'way and 46 St.
Wien Du Stadt Der Lieder—Little Carnegie—57 St. E. of 7 Ave.
Trans-Lux—Modern Theatre—58 St. at Madison Ave.
Tabu—Central Park—59 St. and 7 Ave.
Comrades of 1918—5 Ave. Playhouse—66 Fifth Ave.

Discussion—Debate

V. F. Calverton on "Plight of Capitalism," and Dr. S. D. Schmalhausen on "Promise of Communism," Tuesday, April 14, at 8:30, at the Auditorium, 150 W. 85 St.

Clarence Darrow and John Haynes Homes, Debate, "Will Zionism Succeed," Tuesday, April 14, at 8:30, Mecca Auditorium, 135 W. 55 St.

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By BERNARD SHAW

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The film, one of the most satisfying during the current season, again shows us Mr. Lewis Milestone, who directed "All Quiet on the Western Front," as one of the most sensitive and intelligent directors in Hollywood. His treatment is distinguished not by any striking contrasts of light and shade, by any emphasis of action, but by an atmospheric unity in which all characters and all action flow in a constant stream as parts of a single whole. One is brought to realize this dramatic unity when the flow is suddenly arrested by a lyrical interlude between the condemned man, Williams, and his street-walker friend, a scene that both emotionally and dramatically belongs to a different world. Neither this episode, however, nor the conventional scenes—they are fortunately few—of the romance of the star reporter, Johnson, nor the romantic embellishment of the newspaperman and his profession are sufficient to destroy the air of verisimilitude which pervades the picture, and which is sustained largely by its effortless and expert acting. By far the highest honors in this go to Mr. Menjou, who gives as polished a performance of a gruff and unscrupulous editor as he used to give of a man about town. Mr. Pat O'Brien in the role of the reporter Johnson is rather colorless, but his confreres in the court pressroom are as bright and glittering a group of characters as has ever appeared on the screen.

"Tabu" (Central) adds little to the artistic reputation of F. W. Murnau, who died within a few days of the opening of his film in New York. Murnau's greatest achievement was "The Last Laugh," produced in cooperation with Karl Freund and Emil Jannings. None of his other pictures, including the heavy-footed "Faust" and all of his American efforts, comes anywhere within a measurable distance of that early masterpiece. "Tabu" is deliberate and forced in its playfulness, cheaply melodramatic in its tragedy, and unconscionably long-winded. It has neither the charm of Flaherty's "Moana" nor the pictorial and dramatic force of "The Last Laugh."

ALEXANDER BAKSHY

Drama

The Changing Shaw

THE title of this article is misleading. Shaw has never changed. But we have changed with respect to him—changed so many times, probably, that he could now say of us, if he thought it worth while, what we used to say of him, namely, that we are a bundle of mountebanks, a set of inconsistent and bewildering buffoons. How reconcile the various views we have taken of him during the long generation when he has been the best brain on the stage? How account for the especially rapid reversal of opinion in the past five years? How explain the fact that "Getting Married," when revived the other night by the Theater Guild (Guild Theater), was greeted on the whole rather coolly, or at any rate with little nervousness, little fever, in the laughter? Doubtless there is no explanation beyond the very simple one that men always behave this way in the presence of brains. Brains confuse us. A man who has a mind and who never changes it keeps us guessing. And there is no more ridiculous posture than the guessing posture. We cannot help looking foolish in

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the company of someone whom we do not understand, and this is particularly true if he amuses us.

The future of Shaw's reputation is impossible to predict. But one can say of its past that it has had at least three periods. There was the remote and happily dead time when Shaw seemed an irresponsible clown. He was represented, often in visible caricatures, as standing on his head to make us laugh. And, the theory went, we merely laughed. Now few things are more certain, probably, than that there is no such thing as mere laughter. Laughter must be at something, or for something; there must be a reason. Realizing this, we discovered the "serious" Shaw, the Socialist and the Nietzschean, with ideas which might be worth agreeing with, or at any rate understanding. He was praised for the consistency and the importance of his thought—laughter being something that by accident came with it, as decoration or as wrapping. But a third period followed—the one we are now in.

The present revival of "Getting Married" should show anyone how silly it is to take Shaw seriously. In so far as the play is about marriage it has little to "teach" us, however much it may once have had. No, the first of these positions is better than that. And yet the first position can no longer be held in its original innocence. Now that we have considered Shaw's ideas at all, we cannot refuse to admit their presence. They are there, and they cannot be got around. What shall we do with them? The answer seems clear enough. Take them as ideas, and not as truths.

Whatever Shaw as a person may believe or disbelieve, as an artist he believes nothing, and that must always have been the case. He possesses the more important faculty, for comedy at least, of being able to take delight in an endless comparison of beliefs. That is what happens in "Getting Married," where surely nothing is settled about the institution under discussion —nothing except the fact that it is an excellent institution to discuss. Nobody in the play convinces anybody else; they all resume their original relations; and Mrs. George goes into a trance. The argument ends, in other words, where Plato's arguments are sometimes said to end, in a realization that the truth is undiscoverable, and in a vision. The moral of "Getting Married" is that we must give up marriage as a bad job in which there can be no earthly justice; give it up, get married, and go on talking.

It is talk that Shaw as an artist is concerned with; he has rarely done anything else in a play than assemble a number of persons who talk well. He can get on with any of his creatures who knows how to express himself; and he sees to it that all of his creatures get on together. There are really no hard feelings among them, for they delight one another even with their insults; all of them are at once insufferable and irresistible. Otherwise how could the conversation continue? It does continue, and we like these persons—even the knaves and fools—as much as Shaw likes them, and for the same reason. Each of them has an idea, indeed is an idea. So, liking them, we find ourselves liking ideas. Which is vastly more important, where the art of comedy is concerned, than discovering the truth.

This may not be the final Shaw, but the Guild's excellent performance of "Getting Married" convinces me that it is the best one we have had so far, if the least sensational. And it is one we can settle down to.

"Lady Beyond the Moon" (Bijou Theater), by William Doyle, is about some Riviera Americans who are nobler at heart than they at first appear; as lovers they wait years for one another, only to give one another up at the slightest misunderstanding; yet not, of course, irretrievably or in vain, since it is the lesson of nobility that they learn to read in the good old type known as Great Primer.

MARK VAN DOREN

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Contributors to This Issue

DEVERE ALLEN, editor of the *World Tomorrow*, has been spending the winter studying conditions in Europe.

ROBERT A. BAKEMAN is field secretary of the American Civil Liberties Union.

WILLIAM PICKENS is field secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

HORACE GREGORY will publish a translation of Catullus in the spring.

KAY BOYLE is the author of a novel, "Plagued by the Nightingale."

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER is the author of "Preludes and Symphonies."

LOUIS UNTERMEYER is the editor of "Modern American Poetry" and "Modern British Poetry."

NEWTON ARVIN is professor of English at Smith College.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER is the author of "Doctor Transit."

JAMES TRUSLOW ADAMS is the author of "The Adams Family."

ROBERT CANTWELL is a contributor to the "American Caravan."

LOUIS FISCHER is just publishing "Why Recognize Russia?"

EMERY NEFF is assistant professor of English at Columbia University.

WILLIAM TROY is an instructor in the English department at Washington Square College, New York University.

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